

## John: 11:1–45

### From Catena Aurea:

1. Now a certain man was sick, named Lazarus, of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha.
2. (It was that Mary which anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick.)
3. Therefore his sisters sent unto him, saying, Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick.
4. When Jesus heard that, he said, This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby.
5. Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus.

**AUGUSTINE.** (Tr. xlix. 1) The resurrection of Lazarus is more spoken of than any of our Lord's miracles. But if we bear in mind who He was who wrought this miracle, we shall feel not so much of wonder, as of delight. He who made the man, raised the man; and it is a greater thing to create a man, than to revive him. Lazarus was sick at Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha. The place was near Jerusalem.

**CHRYSOSTOM.** (Greg. Hom. lxii. 1) First we are to observe that this was not the harlot mentioned in Luke, but an honest woman, who treated our Lord with marked reverence.

**AUGUSTINE.** (de Con. Ev. ii. lxxix.) John here confirms the passage in Luke (Luke 7:38), where this is said to have taken place in the house of one Simon a Pharisee: Mary had done this act therefore on a former occasion. That she did it again at Bethany is not mentioned in the narrative of Luke, but is in the other three Gospels.

**AUGUSTINE.** (de Verb. Dom. s. lii) A cruel sickness had seized Lazarus; a wasting fever was eating away the body of the wretched man day by day: his two sisters sat sorrowful at his bedside, grieving for the sick youth continually. They sent to Jesus: Therefore his sisters sent unto Him, saying, Lord, behold he whom Thou lovest is sick.

**AUGUSTINE.** (Tr. xlix. 5) They did not say, Come and heal; they dared not say, Speak the word there, and it shall be done here; but only, Behold, he whom Thou lovest is sick. As if to say, It is enough that Thou know it, Thou art not one to love and then to desert whom Thou lovest.

**CHRYSOSTOM.** (Hom. lxii. 1) They hope to excite Christ's pity by these words, Whom as yet they thought to be a man only. Like the centurion and nobleman, they sent, not went, to Christ; partly from their great faith in Him, for they knew Him intimately, partly because their sorrow kept them at home.

**THEOPHYLACT.** And because they were women, and it did not become them to leave their home if they could help it. Great devotion and faith is expressed in these words, Behold, he whom Thou lovest is sick. Such was their idea of our Lord's power, that they were surprised, that one, whom He loved, could be seized with sickness.

**AUGUSTINE.** (Tr. xlix. 6) When Jesus heard that, He said, This sickness is not unto death. For this death itself was not unto death, but to give occasion for a miracle; whereby men might be brought to believe in Christ, and so escape real death. It was for the glory of God, wherein observe that our Lord calls Himself God by implication, thus confounding those heretics who say that the Son of God is not God. For the glory of what God? Hear what follows, That the Son of God might be glorified thereby, i. e. by that sickness.

**CHRYSOSTOM.** (Hom. lxii. 1) That here signifies not the cause, but the event. The sickness sprang from natural causes, but He turned it to the glory of God.

Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus.

**AUGUSTINE.** (Tr. xlix. 7) He is sick, they sorrowful, all beloved. Wherefore they had hope, for they were beloved by Him Who is the Comforter of the sorrowful, and the Healer of the sick.

**CHRYSOSTOM.** (Hom. lxii non occ. v. lxii. 3.) Wherein the Evangelist instructs us not to be sad, if sickness ever falls upon good men, and friends of God.

11:6–10

6. When he had heard therefore that he was sick, he abode two days still in the same place where he was.

7. Then after that saith he to his disciples, Let us go into Judæa again.

8. His disciples say unto him, Master, the Jews of late sought to stone thee; and goest thou thither again?

9. Jesus answered, Are there not twelve hours in the day? If any man walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world.

10. But if a man walk in the night, he stumbleth, because there is no light in him.

**CHRYSOSTOM.** (Hom. lxii. 1) To give time for his death and burial, that they might say, he stinketh, and none doubt that it was death, and not a trance, from which he was raised.

Then after that saith He to His disciples, Let us go into Judæa again.

**AUGUSTINE.** (Tr. xlix. 7) Where He had just escaped being stoned; for this was the cause of His leaving. He left indeed as man: He left in weakness, but He returns in power.

**CHRYSOSTOM.** (Hom. lxii. 1) He had not as yet told His disciples where He was going; but now He tells them, in order to prepare them beforehand, for they are in great alarm, when they hear of it: His disciples say unto Him, Master, the Jews sought to stone Thee, and goest Thou thither again? They feared both for Him, and for themselves; for they were not yet confirmed in faith.

**AUGUSTINE.** (Tr. xlix. 8) When men presumed to give advice to God, disciples to their Master, our Lord rebuked them: Jesus answered, Are there not twelve hours in the day? He shewed Himself to be the day, by appointing twelve disciples: i. e. reckoning Matthias in the place of Judas, and passing over the latter altogether. The hours are lightened by the day; that by the preaching of the hours, the world may believe on the day. Follow Me then, saith our Lord, if ye wish not to stumble: If any man walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world: But if a man walk in the night he stumbleth, because there is no light in him.

**CHRYSOSTOM.** (Hom. lxii. 1) As if to say, The upright need fear no evil: the wicked only have cause to fear. We have done nothing worthy of death, and therefore are in no danger. Or, If any one seeth this world's light, he is safe; much more he who is with Me.

**THEOPHYLACT.** Some understand the day to be the time preceding the Passion, the night to be the Passion. In this sense, while it is day, would mean, before My Passion; Ye will not stumble before My Passion, because the Jews will not persecute you; but when the night, i. e. My Passion, cometh, then shall ye be beset with darkness and difficulties.

11. These things said he: and after that he saith unto them, Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go that I may awake him out of sleep.

12. Then said his disciples, Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well.

13. Howbeit Jesus spake of his death: but they thought that he had spoken of taking of rest in sleep.

14. Then said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead.

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

16. Then said Thomas, which is called Didymus, unto his fellowdisciples, Let us also go, that we may die with him.

**CHRYSOSTOM.** (Hom. lxii. 1) After He has comforted His disciples in one way, He comforts them in another, by telling them that they were not going to Jerusalem, but to Bethany: These things saith He: and after that He saith unto them, Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go that I may awake him out of sleep: as if to say, I am not going to dispute again with the Jews, but to awaken our friend. Our friend, He says, to shew how strongly they were bound to go.

**AUGUSTINE.** (Tr. xlix. c. 9) It was really true that He was sleeping. To our Lord, he was sleeping; to men who could not raise him again, he was dead. Our Lord awoke him with as much ease from his grave, as thou awakest a sleeper from his bed. He calls him then asleep, with reference to His own power, as the Apostle saith, But I would not have you to be ignorant, concerning them which are asleep. (1 Thess. 4:13) Asleep, He says, because He is speaking of their resurrection which was to be. But as it matters to those who sleep and wake again daily, what they see in their sleep, some having pleasant dreams, others painful ones, so it is in death; every one sleeps and rises again with his own account.<sup>a</sup>

**CHRYSOSTOM.** (Hom. lxii. 1) The disciples however wished to prevent Him going to Judæa: Then said His disciples, Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well. Sleep is a good sign in sickness. And therefore if he sleep, say they, what need to go and awake him.

**AUGUSTINE.** (Tr. xlix. 11) The disciples replied, as they understood Him: Howbeit Jesus spake of his death; but they thought that He had spoken of taking rest in sleep.

**CHRYSOSTOM.** (Hom. lxii. 2.) But if any one say, that the disciples could not but have known that our Lord meant Lazarus's death, when He said, that I may awake him; because it would have been absurd to have gone such a distance merely to awake Lazarus out of sleep; we answer, that our Lord's words were a kind of enigma to the disciples, here as elsewhere often.

**AUGUSTINE.** (Tr. xlix. 11) He then declares His meaning openly: Then said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead.

**CHRYSOSTOM.** (Hom. lxii. 2) But He does not add here, I go that I may awake him. He did not wish to anticipate the miracle by talking of it; a hint to us to shun vain glory, and abstain from empty promises.

**AUGUSTINE.** (Tr. xlix. 11) He had been sent for to restore Lazarus from sickness, not from death. But how could the death be hid from Him, into whose hands the soul of the dead had flown?

And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, that ye might believe; i. e. seeing My marvellous power of knowing a thing I have neither seen nor heard. The disciples already believed in Him in consequence of His miracles; so that their faith had not now to begin, but only to increase. That ye might believe, means, believe more deeply, more firmly.

**THEOPHYLACT.** Some have understood this place thus. I rejoice, He says, for your sakes; for if I had been there, I should have only cured a sick man; which is but an inferior sign of power. But since in My absence he has died, ye will now see that I can raise even the dead putrefying body; and your faith will be strengthened.

**CHRYSOSTOM.** (Hom. lxii. 2) The disciples all dreaded the Jews; and especially Thomas; Then said Thomas, which is called Didymus, unto his fellow-disciples, Let us also go, that we may die with him. But he who was now the most weak and unbelieving of all the disciples, afterwards became stronger than any. And he who dared not go to Bethany, afterwards went over the whole earth, in the midst of those who wished his death, with a spirit indomitable.

11:17–27

17. Then when Jesus came, he found that he had lain in the grave four days already.

18. Now Bethany was nigh unto Jerusalem, about fifteen furlongs off:

19. And many of the Jews came to Martha and Mary, to comfort them concerning their brother.

20. Then Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met him: but Mary sat still in the house.

21. Then said Martha unto Jesus, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.

22. But I know, that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee.

23. Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again.

24. Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day.

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:

26. And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?

27. She saith unto him, Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world.

**CHRYSOSTOM.** (Hom. lxii. 2) Our Lord had stayed two days, and the messenger had come the day before; the very day on which Lazarus died. This brings us to the fourth day.

**AUGUSTINE.** (Tract. xlix. 12) Of the four days many things may be said. They refer to one thing, but one thing viewed in different ways. There is one day of death which the law of our birth brings upon us. Men transgress the natural law, and this is another day of death. The written law is given to men by the hands of Moses, and that is despised—a third day of death. The Gospel comes, and men transgress it—a fourth day of death. But Christ doth not disdain to awaken even these.

Now Bethany was nigh unto Jerusalem, about fifteen furlongs off.

**CHRYSOSTOM.** (Hom. lxii. 2) Two miles. This is mentioned to account for so many coming from Jerusalem: And many of the Jews came to Martha and Mary, to comfort them concerning their brother. But how could the Jews be consoling the beloved of Christ, when they had resolved that whoever confessed Christ should be put out of the synagogue? Perhaps the extreme affliction of the sisters excited their sympathy; or they wished to shew respect for their rank. Or perhaps they who came were of the better sort; as we find many of them believed. Their presence is mentioned to do away with all doubt of the real death of Lazarus.

**CHRYSOSTOM.** (Hom. lxii. 2.) Martha does not take her sister with her, because she wants to speak with Christ alone, and tell Him what has happened. When her hopes had been raised by Him, then she went her way, and called Mary.

**THEOPHYLACT.** At first she does not tell her sister, for fear, if she came, the Jews present might accompany her. And she did not wish them to know of our Lord's coming.

Then saith Martha unto Jesus, Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.

**CHRYSOSTOM.** (Hom. lxii. 3) She believed in Christ, but she believed not as she ought. She did not speak as if He were God: If Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.

**THEOPHYLACT.** She did not know that He could have restored her brother as well absent as present.

**CHRYSOSTOM.** (Hom. lxii. 3) Nor did she know that He wrought His miracles by His own independent power: But I know that even now, whatsoever Thou will ask of God, God will give it Thee. She only thinks Him some very gifted man.

**AUGUSTINE.** (Tr. xlix. 13) She does not say to Him, Bring my brother to life again; for how could she know that it would be good for him to come to life again; she says, I know that Thou canst do so, if Thou wilt; but what Thou wilt do is for Thy judgment, not for my presumption to determine.

**CHRYSOSTOM.** (Hom. lxii. 3) But our Lord taught her the truths which she did not know: Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again. Observe, He does not say, I will ask God, that he may rise again, nor on the other hand does He say, I want no help, I do all things of Myself; a declaration which would have been too much for the woman; but something between the two, He shall rise again.

**AUGUSTINE.** (Tr. xlix. 14) Shall rise again, is ambiguous: for He does not say, now. And therefore it follows: Martha saith unto Him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day: of that resurrection I am certain; of this I am doubtful.

**CHRYSOSTOM.** (Hom. lxii) She had often heard Christ speak of the resurrection. Jesus now declares His power more plainly: Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection and the life. He needed therefore none to help Him; for if He did, how could He be the resurrection. And if He is the life, He is not confined by place, but is every where, and can heal every where.

**CHRYSOSTOM.** (Hom. lxii) To Martha's, Whatsoever Thou shall ask, He replies, He that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: shewing her that He is the Giver of all good, and that we must ask of Him. Thus He leads her to the knowledge of high truths; and whereas she had been enquiring only about the resurrection of Lazarus, tells her of a resurrection in which both she and all present would share.

**AUGUSTINE.** (Tr. xlix. 15) He that believeth in Me, though he were dead: i. e. though his flesh die, his soul shall live till the flesh rise again, never to die more. For faith is the life of the soul.

And whosoever liveth, in the flesh, and believeth in Me, though he die for a time in the flesh, shall not die eternally.

**CHRYSOSTOM.** (Hom. lxii. 3) She seems not to have understood His words; i. e. she saw that He meant something great, but did not see what that was. She is asked one thing, and answers another.

**AUGUSTINE.** (Tr. xlix. 15) When I believed that Thou wert the Son of God, I believed that Thou wert the resurrection, that Thou wert life; and that he that believeth in Thee, though he were dead, shall live.

11:28–32

28. And when she had so said, she went her way, and called Mary her sister secretly, saying, The Master is come, and calleth for thee.

29. And as soon as she heard that, she arose quickly, and came unto him.

30. Now Jesus was not yet come into the town, but was in that place where Martha met him.

31. The Jews then which were with her in the house, and comforted her, when they saw Mary, that she rose up hastily and went out, followed her, saying, She goeth unto the grave to weep there.

32. Then when Mary was come where Jesus was, and saw him, she fell down at his feet, saying unto him, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.

**CHRYSOSTOM.** (Hom. lxii. 3) Christ's words had the effect of stopping Martha's grief. In her devotion to her Master she had no time to think of her afflictions: And when she had so said, she went her way, and called Mary her sister secretly.

**AUGUSTINE.** (Tr. xlix. 16) Silently<sup>1</sup>, i. e. speaking in a low voice. For she did speak, saying, The Master is come, and calleth for thee.



**CHRYSOSTOM.** (Hom. lxii) She calls her sister secretly, in order not to let the Jews know that Christ was coming. (non occ.). For had they known, they would have gone, and not been witnesses of the miracle.

**AUGUSTINE.** (Tr. xlix. 16) We may observe that the Evangelist has not said, where, or when, or how, the Lord called Mary, but for brevity's sake has left it to be gathered from Martha's words.

**THEOPHYLACT.** Perhaps she thought the presence of Christ in itself a call, as if it were inexcusable, when Christ came, that she should not go out to meet Him.

**CHRYSOSTOM.** (Hom. lxiii. 1) While the rest sat around her in her sorrow, she did not wait for the Master to come to her, but, not letting her grief detain her, rose immediately to meet Him; As soon as she heard that, she arose quickly, and came unto Him.

**AUGUSTINE.** (Tr. xlix. non occ.) So we see, if she had known of His arrival before, she would not have let Martha go without her.

Now Jesus was not yet come into the town, but was in that place where Martha met Him.

**CHRYSOSTOM.** (Hom. lxiii. 1) He went slowly, that He might not seem to catch at an occasion of working a miracle, but to have it forced upon Him by others asking. Mary, it is said, arose quickly, and thus anticipated His coming. The Jews accompanied her: The Jews then which were with her in the house, and comforted her, when they saw Mary that she arose up hastily and went out, followed her, saying, She goeth unto the grave to weep there.

**AUGUSTINE.** (Tr. xlix. 16) The Evangelist mentions this to shew how it was that so many were present at Lazarus' resurrection, and witness of that great miracle.

Then when Mary was come where Jesus was, and saw Him, she fell down at His feet.

**CHRYSOSTOM.** (Hom. lxiii. 1) She is more fervent than her sister. Forgetful of the crowd around her, and of the Jews, some of whom were enemies to Christ, she threw herself at her Master's feet. In His presence all earthly things were nought to her; she thought of nothing but giving Him honour.

**THEOPHYLACT.** But her faith seems as yet imperfect: Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.

**AUGUSTINE.** (de Verb. Dom. s. lii) O faithless assembly! Whilst Thou art yet in the world, Lazarus Thy friend dieth! If the friend dies, what will the enemy suppose? Is it a small thing that they will not serve Thee upon earth? lo, hell hath taken Thy beloved.

11:33–41

33. When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, he groaned in the spirit, and was troubled,

34. And said, Where have ye laid him? They said unto him, Lord, come and see.

35. Jesus wept.

36. Then said the Jews, Behold how he loved him!

37. And some of them said, Could not this man, which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died?

38. Jesus therefore again groaning in himself cometh to the grave. It was a cave, and a stone lay upon it.

39. Jesus said, Take ye away the stone. Martha, the sister of him that was dead, saith unto him, Lord, by this time he stinketh: for he hath been dead four days.

40. Jesus saith unto her, Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?

41. Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid.

**CHRYSOSTOM.** (Hom. lxiii. 1) Christ did not answer Mary, as He had her sister, on account of the people present. In condescension to them He humbled Himself, and let His human nature be seen, in order to gain them as witnesses to the miracle: When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, He groaned in His spirit, and was troubled.

**AUGUSTINE.** (Tr. xlix) For who but Himself could trouble Him? Christ was troubled, because it pleased Him to be troubled; He hungered, because it pleased Him to hunger. It was in His own power to be affected in this or that way, or not. The Word took up soul and flesh, and whole man, and fitted it to Himself in unity of person. And thus according to the nod and will of that higher nature in Him, in which the sovereign power resides, He becomes weak and troubled.

**THEOPHYLACT.** To prove His human nature He sometimes gives it free vent, while at other times He commands, and restrains it by the power of the Holy Ghost. Our Lord allows His nature to be affected in these ways, both to prove that He is very Man, not Man in appearance only; and also to teach us by His own example the due measures of joy and grief. For the absence altogether of sympathy and sorrow is brutal, the excess of them is womanly.

**AUGUSTINE.** (de Ver. Dom. s. lii) And said, Where have ye laid him? He knew where, but He asked to try the faith of the people.

**CHRYSOSTOM.** (Hom. lxiii. 1) He did not wish to thrust the miracle upon them, but to make them ask for it, and thus do away with all suspicions.

**AUGUSTINE.** (lib. 83. Quæst. qu. lxxv.) The question has an allusion too to our hidden calling. That predestination by which we are called, is hidden; and the sign of its being so is our Lord asking the question: He being as it were in ignorance, so long as we are ignorant ourselves. Or because our Lord elsewhere shews that He knows not sinners, saying, I know you not, (Matt. 7:23) because in keeping His commandments there is no sin.

They said unto Him, Lord, come and see.

**CHRYSOSTOM.** (Hom. lxiii. 1) He had not yet raised any one from the dead; and seemed as if He came to weep, not to raise to life. Wherefore they say to Him, Come and see.

**AUGUSTINE.** (Tr. xlix. 20.) The Lord sees when He pities, as we read, Look upon my adversity and misery, and forgive me all my sin. (Ps. 24:18.)

Jesus wept.

**AUGUSTINE.** (Tr. xlix. non occ.) Wherefore did Christ weep, but to teach men to weep?

**AUGUSTINE.** (Tr. xlix. 21) Loved him. Our Lord came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance. And some of them said, Could not this Man which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died? He was about to do more than this, to raise him from death.

**CHRYSOSTOM.** (Hom. lxiii. 1) It was His enemies who said this. The very works, which should have evidenced His power, they turn against Him, as if He had not really done them. This is the way that they speak of the miracle of opening the eyes of the man that was born blind. They even prejudge Christ before

He has come to the grave, and have not the patience to wait for the issue of the matter. Jesus therefore again groaning in Himself, cometh to the grave. That He wept, and He groaned, are mentioned to shew us the reality of His human nature. John who enters into higher statements as to His nature than any of the other Evangelists, also descends lower than any in describing His bodily affections.

**AUGUSTINE.** (Tr. xlix) And do thou too groan in thyself, if thou wouldest rise to new life. To every man is this said, who is weighed down by any vicious habit. It was a cave, and a stone lay upon it. The dead under the stone is the guilty under the Law. For the Law, which was given to the Jews, was graven on stone. And all the guilty are under the Law, for the Law was not made for a righteous man.

Jesus said, Take ye away the stone.

**CHRYSOSTOM.** (Hom. lxiii. 2) But why did He not raise him without taking away the stone? Could not He who moved a dead body by His voice, much more have moved a stone? He purposely did not do so, in order that the miracle might take place in the sight of all; to give no room for saying, as they had said in the case of the blind man, This is not he. Now they might go into the grave, and feel and see that this was the man.

**AUGUSTINE.** (Tr. xlix. c. 22) Take ye away the stone; mystically, Take away the burden of the law, proclaim grace.

**AUGUSTINE.** (lib. 83. Quæst. qu. 61) Perhaps those are signified who wished to impose the rite of circumcision on the Gentile converts; or men in the Church of corrupt life, who offend believers.

**AUGUSTINE.** (de Ver. Dom. serm. lii) Mary and Martha, the sisters of Lazarus, though they had often seen Christ raise the dead, did not fully believe that He could raise their brother; Martha, the sister of him that was dead, saith unto Him, Lord, by this time he stinketh, for he hath been dead four days.

**THEOPHYLACT.** Martha said this from weakness of faith, thinking it impossible that Christ could raise her brother, so long after death.

**CHRYSOSTOM.** (Hom. lxiii. 2) Thus every thing tends to stop the mouths of the unbelieving. Their hands take away the stone, their ears hear Christ's voice, their eyes see Lazarus come forth, they perceive the smell of the dead body.

**THEOPHYLACT.** Christ reminds Martha of what He had told her before, which she had forgotten: Jesus saith unto her, Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?

**CHRYSOSTOM.** (Hom. lxiii) She did not remember what He said above, He that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live. To the disciples He had said, That the Son of God might be glorified thereby; here it is the glory of the Father He speaks of. The difference is made to suit the different hearers. Our Lord could not rebuke her before such a number, but only says, Thou shalt see the glory of God.

**AUGUSTINE.** (Tr. xlix) Herein is the glory of God, that he that stinketh and hath been dead four days, is brought to life again.

Then they took away the stone.

**ORIGEN.** (tom. in Joan. xxviii.) The delay in taking away the stone was caused by the sister of the dead, who said, By this time he stinketh, for he hath been dead four days. If she had not said this, it would not be said, Jesus said, Take away the stone. Some delay had arisen; it is best to let nothing come between the commands of Jesus and doing them.

11:41–46

41. And Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me.

42. And I knew that thou hearest me always: but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me.

43. And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth.

44. And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with graveclothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go.

45. Then many of the Jews which came to Mary, and had seen the things which Jesus did, believed on him.

46. But some of them went their ways to the Pharisees, and told them what things Jesus had done.

**ORIGEN.** (tom. xxviii.) He lifted up His eyes; mystically, He lifted up the human mind by prayer to the Father above. We should pray after Christ's pattern, Lift up the eyes of our heart, and raise them above present things in memory, in thought, in intention. If to them who pray worthily after this fashion is given the promise in Isaiah, Thou shalt cry, and He shall say, Here I am; (Isa. 58:9) what answer, think we, our Lord and Saviour would receive? He was about to pray for the resurrection of Lazarus. He was heard by

the Father before He prayed; His request was granted before made. And therefore He begins with giving thanks; I thank Thee, Father, that Thou hast heard Me.

**CHRYSOSTOM.** (Hom. lxiv. 2) i. e. There is no difference of will between Me and Thee. Thou hast heard Me, does not shew any lack of power in Him, or that He is inferior to the Father. It is a phrase that is used between friends and equals. That the prayer is not really necessary for Him, appears from the words that follow, And I knew that Thou heardest Me always: as if He said, I need not prayer to persuade Thee; for Ours is one will. He hides His meaning on account of the weak faith of His hearers. For God regards not so much His own dignity, as our salvation; and therefore seldom speaks loftily of Himself, and, even when He does, speaks in an obscure way; whereas humble expressions abound in His discourses.

**HILARY.** (lib. x. de Trin.) He did not therefore need to pray: He prayed for our sakes, that we might know Him to be the Son: But because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that Thou hast sent Me. His prayer did not benefit Himself, but benefited our faith. He did not want help, but we want instruction.

**CHRYSOSTOM.** (Hom. lxiv. 2) He did not say, That they may believe that I am inferior to Thee, in that I cannot do this without prayer, but, that Thou hast sent Me. He saith not, hast sent Me weak, acknowledging subjection, doing nothing of Myself, but hast sent Me in such sense, as that man may see that I am from God, not contrary to God; and that I do this miracle in accordance with His will.

**AUGUSTINE.** (de Verb. Dom. Serm. lii) Christ went to the grave in which Lazarus slept, as if He were not dead, but alive and able to hear, for He forthwith called him out of his grave: And when He had thus spoken, He cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. He calls him by name, that He may not bring out all the dead.

**CHRYSOSTOM.** (Hom. lxiv. 2) He does not say, Arise, but, Come forth, speaking to the dead as if he were alive. For which reason also He does not say, Come forth in My Father's name, or, Father, raise him, but throwing off the whole appearance of one praying, proceeds to shew His power by acts. This is His general way. His words shew humility, His acts power.

**THEOPHYLACT.** The voice which roused Lazarus, is the symbol of that trumpet which will sound at the general resurrection. (He spoke loud, to contradict the Gentile fable, that the soul remained in the tomb. The soul of Lazarus is called to as if it were absent, and a loud voice were necessary to summon it.) And as the general resurrection is to take place in the twinkling of an eye, so did this single one: And he that

was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with grave clothes, and his face was bound about with a napkin. Now is accomplished what was said above, The hour is coming, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live. (5:25)

**ORIGEN.** (t. xxviii.) His cry and loud voice it was which awoke him, as Christ had said, I go to awake him. The resurrection of Lazarus is the work of the Father also, in that He heard the prayer of the Son. It is the joint work of Father and Son, one praying, the other hearing; for as the Father raiseth up the dead and quickeneth them, even so the Son quickeneth whom He will. (5:21)

**CHRYSOSTOM.** (Hom. lxiiv) He came forth bound, that none might suspect that he was a mere phantom. Besides, that this very fact, viz. of coming forth bound, was itself a miracle, as great as the resurrection. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, that by going near and touching him they might be certain he was the very person. And let him go. His humility is shewn here; He does not take Lazarus about with Him for the sake of display.

**ORIGEN.** (t. xxviii. 10.) Our Lord had said above, Because of the people that stand by I said it, that they may believe that Thou hast sent Me. It would have been ignorance of the future, if He had said this, and none believed, after all. Therefore it follows: Then many of the Jews which came to Mary, and had seen the things which Jesus did, believed on Him. But some of them went their way to the Pharisees, and told them what things Jesus had done. It is doubtful from these words, whether those who went to the Pharisees, were of those many who believed, and meant to conciliate the opponents of Christ; or whether they were of the unbelieving party, and wished to inflame the envy of the Pharisees against Him. The latter seems to me the true supposition; especially as the Evangelist describes those who believed as the larger party. Many believed; whereas it is only a few who go to the Pharisees: Some of them went to the Pharisees, and told them what things Jesus had done.

**AUGUSTINE.** (lib. lxxxiii. Quæst. q. 65) Although according to the Gospel history, we hold that Lazarus was really raised to life, yet I doubt not that his resurrection is an allegory as well. We do not, because we allegorize facts, lose our belief in them as facts.

**AUGUSTINE.** (Tr. super Joan. xlix. 3) Every one that sinneth, dies; but God, of His great mercy, raises the soul to life again, and does not suffer it to die eternally. The three miraculous resurrections in the Gospels, I understand to testify the resurrection of the soul.

**AUGUSTINE.** (Tr. xlix. 3) Or, it is death within; when the evil thought has not come out into action. But if thou actually do the evil thing, thou hast as it were carried the dead outside the gate.

**AUGUSTINE.** (lib. lxxxii. Quæst. q. lxxv.) Or we may take Lazarus in the grave as the soul laden with earthly sins.

**AUGUSTINE.** (in Joan. Tr. xlix) And yet our Lord loved Lazarus. For had He not loved sinners, He would never have come down from heaven to save them. Well is it said of one of sinful habits, that He stinketh. He hath a bad report<sup>1</sup> already, as it were the foulest odour.

**AUGUSTINE.** (lib. lxxxiii. Quæst. q. 65) Well may she say, He hath been dead four days. For the earth is the last of the elements. It signifies the pit of earthly sins, i. e. carnal lusts.

**AUGUSTINE.** (Tract. in Joan. xlix. 19) The Lord groaned, wept, cried with a loud voice. It is hard for Him to arise, who is bowed down with the weight of evil habits. Christ troubleth Himself, to signify to thee that thou shouldest be troubled, when thou art pressed and weighed down with such a mass of sin. Faith groaneth, he that is displeased with himself groaneth, and accuseth his own evil deeds; that so the habit of sin may yield to the violence of repentance. When thou sayest, I have done such a thing, and God has spared me; I have heard the Gospel, and despised it; what shall I do? then Christ groaneth, because faith groaneth; and in the voice of thy groaning appeareth the hope of thy rising again.

**AUGUSTINE.** (lib. lxxxiii. Quæst. q. 65) That Lazarus came forth from the grave, signifies the soul's deliverance from carnal sins. That he came bound up in grave clothes means, that even we who are delivered from carnal things, and serve with the mind the law of God, yet cannot, so long as we are in the body, be free from the besetments of the flesh. That his face was bound about with a napkin means, that we do not attain to full knowledge in this life. And when our Lord says, Loose him, and let him go, we learn that in another world all veils will be removed, and that we shall see face to face.

**AUGUSTINE.** (Tr. xlix) Or thus: When thou despisest, thou liest dead; when thou confessest, thou comest forth. For what is to come forth, but to go out, as it were, of thy hiding place, and shew thyself? But thou canst not make this confession, except God move thee to it, by crying with a loud voice, i. e. calling thee with great grace. But even after the dead man has come forth, he remains bound for some time, i. e. is as yet only a penitent. Then our Lord says to His ministers, Loose him, and let him go, i. e. remit his sins: Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. (Matt. 18:18)



## From Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture:

### 11:1 Lazarus, Mary and Martha

#### The Maker Raises His Creation.

Augustine: Among all the miracles done by our Lord Jesus Christ, the resurrection of Lazarus holds a prime place in preaching. But if we consider attentively who did it, our duty is to rejoice rather than to wonder. A man was raised up by him who made humankind. He is the only one of the Father by whom, as you know, all things were made. And if all things were made by him, why is anyone amazed that one was raised by him when so many are daily brought into the world by his power? It is a greater deed to create men and women than to raise them again from the dead. Yet he decided both to create and to raise again; to create all, to resuscitate some. Tractates on the Gospel of John 49.1.

#### The Tears of Mary and Martha.

Romanus Melodus:

Let us all, with longing, run to Bethany to see Christ there, weeping for his friend.

For desiring all things to be ordained by law,

He accomplishes all things in the duality of his nature. He suffers as son of David.

As Son of God, he redeems the whole world

From all the evil of the serpent,

And on the fourth day, he raises up Lazarus,

Taking pity as the one who has compassion on

The tears of Mary and Martha.

Together sustained by faith,

These women announced to Christ and to God the death of their sibling, saying,

“Hurry, come, you who are always present in all places,

For Lazarus whom you love is sick.

Therefore if you come near,

Death will run away, and your friend will be delivered from corruption,

And the Jews will see that you, the Merciful One, have had compassion on

The tears of Mary and Martha.”

Kontakion on the Raising of Lazarus 27.2–3.

### **11:2 Mary, Who Anointed the Lord**

#### **Edifying Description of the Sisters.**

Cyril of Alexandria: The Evangelist has a purpose in mentioning the names of the women, showing that they were distinguished for their piety, which is why the Lord loved them. And of the many things that probably had been done for the Lord by Mary, he mentions the ointment, not in a haphazard way but in order to show that Mary had such a thirst for Christ that she wiped his feet with her own hair, seeking to fasten to herself in a more real way the spiritual blessing that comes from his holy flesh. Indeed, she often appears with much warmth of attachment, sitting close to Christ without being distracted by any interruption and to have been drawn into a close relationship of friendship with him. Commentary on the Gospel of John 7.

#### **Mary Is Not the Harlot Mentioned in Luke.**

Chrysostom: First we are to observe that this was not the harlot mentioned in Matthew or Luke, but a different person. Those mentioned in Matthew and Luke were harlots full of many vices, but she was an honest woman, who treated our Lord with marked reverence. Homilies on the Gospel of John 62.1.

### **John Confirms Luke's Account.**

Augustine: John here confirms the passage in Luke, where this is said to have taken place in the house of one Simon a Pharisee: Mary had done this act therefore on a former occasion. That she did it again at Bethany is not mentioned in the narrative of Luke, but it is in the other three Gospels. Harmony of the Gospels 2.79.154.

### **11:3 The One You Love Is Ill**

#### **Death Has Room to Work.**

Gregory of Nyssa: One of the Lord's companions and friends is ill (Lazarus is the sick man's name). The Lord refuses any visiting of his friend, though far away from the sick man, that in the absence of the Life, death might find room and power to do his own work by the agency of disease. On the Making of Man 25.11.

#### **Friends of Christ Do Suffer.**

Chrysostom: Many are offended when they see any of those who are pleasing to God suffering anything terrible. There are those, for instance, who have fallen ill or have become impoverished or have endured some other tragedy. Those who are offended by this do not know that those who are especially dear to God have it as their lot to endure such things, as we see in the case of Lazarus, who was also one of the friends of Christ but was also sick. Homilies on the Gospel of John 62.1.

#### **Conquering Death More Important.**

Peter Chrysologus: Our Lord had raised up the daughter of Jairus, the ruler of the synagogue. Although he restored life to the dead girl, he left the law of death still in force. He also raised the widow's only son. He halted the bier, forestalled the young man's burial, arrested the onset of physical decay. But the life he restored had not completely fallen in to the power of death. The case of Lazarus was unique. His death and resurrection to life had nothing in common with the other two. Death had already exerted its full power over him, so that in him the sign of the resurrection shone out in all its fullness. I think it is possible to say that if Lazarus had remained only three days in the tomb it would have deprived our Lord's resurrection of its full significance, since Christ proved himself Lord by returning to life after three days,

whereas Lazarus, as his servant, had to lie in the grave for four days before he was recalled. However, let us see if we can verify this suggestion by reading the Gospel text further.

“His sisters sent a message to Jesus saying, Lord, the friend whom you love is sick.” By these words they appeal to his affection, they lay claim to his friendship, they call on his love, urging their familiar relationship with him to persuade him to relieve their distress. But for Christ it was more important to conquer death than to cure disease. He showed his love for his friend not by healing him but by calling him back from the grave. Instead of a remedy for his illness, he offered him the glory of rising from the dead. Sermon 63.1–2.

### **Love Does Not Abandon.**

Augustine: But what was the message sent by his sisters? “Lord, behold, he whom you love is ill.” They did not say, “Come,” for the intimation was all that was needed for one who loved. They did not venture to say, “Come and heal him,” nor did they venture to say, “Command there, and it shall be done here.” And why would it be any different with them if, on these very grounds, the centurion’s faith was commended? For he said, “I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof. But only say the word, and my servant shall be healed.” These women said nothing like this, but only, “Lord, behold, he whom you love is ill”—as if to say: It is enough that you know. For you are not one that loves and then abandons. Tractates on the Gospel of John 49.5.

### **11:4 For the Glory of the Son of God**

#### **God Is Not the Cause of Lazarus’s Illness.**

Cyril of Alexandria: Jesus saw that in the end, Lazarus’s illness and death would be for the glory of God. This is not to say that the sickness came on Lazarus so that God should be glorified, for it would be silly to say this, but rather, since the sickness had come upon Lazarus, Jesus foresaw the wonderful conclusion to Lazarus’s illness. Commentary on the Gospel of John 7.

#### **The Glory of Father and Son Is One.**

Chrysostom: Observe how he again asserts that his glory and the Father’s is one. For, after saying “of God,” he has added, “that the Son of God might be glorified.” Homilies on the Gospel of John 62.1.

### **Jesus' Glory Is the Consequence of Lazarus's Death.**

Chrysostom: The word "that" [which is in the phrase "that the Son of God may be glorified,"] here signifies not the cause but the consequence. The sickness sprang from other [natural] causes, but he turned it to the glory of God. Homilies on the Gospel of John 62.1.

### **11:5 Jesus' Love for Mary, Martha and Lazarus**

#### **Loved by the Comforter and Healer.**

Augustine: Lazarus is sick, his sisters are sorrowful, all of them are loved. But [they had hope because the] one who loved them was the healer of the sick—even more, he was the raiser of the dead and the comforter of the sorrowful. Tractates on the Gospel of John 49.7.

### **11:6 Jesus Stayed Two Days Longer**

#### **Jesus Grants Free Reign to the Grave.**

Peter Chrysologus: You see how he gives full scope to death. He grants free reign to the grave. He allows corruption to set in. He prohibits neither putrefaction nor stench from taking their normal course. He allows the realm of darkness to seize his friend, drag him down to the underworld, and take possession of him. He acts like this so that human hope may perish entirely and human despair reach its lowest depths. The deed he is about to accomplish may then clearly be seen to be the work of God, not of man.

[Jesus] waited for Lazarus to die, staying in the same place until he could tell his disciples that he was dead. Then he announced his intention of going to him. "Lazarus is dead," he said, "and I am glad." Was this a sign of his love for his friend? Not so. Christ was glad because their sorrow over the death of Lazarus was soon to be changed into joy at his restoration to life. "I am glad for your sake," he said. Why for their sake? Because the death and raising of Lazarus were a perfect prefiguration of the death and resurrection of the Lord himself. What the Lord was soon to achieve in himself had already been achieved in his servant.... This explains why he said to them, "I am glad for your sake not to have been there, because now you will believe." It was necessary that Lazarus should die, so that the faith of the disciples might also rise with him from the dead. Sermon 63.2.

## **11:7–8 Going Again to Judea**

### **The Attempted Stoning Was in Judea.**

Augustine: [Judea is] where he had just escaped being stoned. For this was the cause of his leaving. He left indeed as man: he left in weakness, but he returns in power. Tractates on the Gospel of John 49.7.

### **Jesus Tries to Prepare the Disciples.**

Chrysostom: He had not as yet told his disciples where he was going. But now he tells them, in order to prepare them beforehand because they are so worried when they hear about it.... They feared both for him and for themselves. For they were not yet established in faith. Homilies on the Gospel of John 62.1.

## **11:9–10 Daylight versus Stumbling in the Dark**

### **Christ Is the Day, the Disciples Are Twelve Hours.**

Augustine: What did the Lord mean? As far as I can judge ... he wanted to dissuade them from their doubting and unbelief. For their words were meant to keep the Lord from death, who had come to die, in order to save themselves from death too. ... And so, when [these] men presumed to give advice to God, disciples to their Master, servants to their Lord, patients to their physician, our Lord reproved them, saying, "Are there not twelve hours in the day? If anyone walks during the day, he does not stumble." Follow me if you do not want to stumble. Do not give counsel to me when you should be receiving it from me instead.... He showed himself to be the day by appointing twelve disciples. If I am the day, he says, and you are the hours, is it for the hours to give counsel to the day? The day is followed by the hours, not the hours by the day.... Even when Judas fell, he was still succeeded by Matthias, and the number twelve was preserved. Our Lord did not make the choice of twelve disciples arbitrarily, then, but to indicate that he himself is the spiritual Day. Let the hours be lightened by the day so that by the preaching of the hours, the world may believe on the day. Follow me, then, says our Lord, if you wish not to stumble. Tractates on the Gospel of John 49.8.

### **Twelve Patriarchs, Twelve Apostles, Twelve Days.**

Origen: As the day is divided into twelve hours, accordingly the twelve patriarchs and the choir of the apostles are equal in number with the hours of the day, having as their Sun Christ our God, who is also

the spiritual Day, from whom there is learning and the enlightenment of its knowledge. Fragment 137 on the Gospel of John.

### **It Is Not the Time for the Sun/Son to Withdraw.**

Cyril of Alexandria: Perhaps he compares to the ever-moving course of the day, the easily-swayed and novelty-loving mind of people, which is not established in one opinion but vacillates from one way of thinking to another, just as the day changes from one hour to another. This is also how the words “are there twelve hours in the day” can be understood. In other words, “I,” he says, “am the Day and the Light. Therefore, just as it is not possible for the light of the day to fail without having completed its appointed time, so it is not among possibilities that the illumination that proceeds from me should be shrouded from the Jews without having fully reached its fitting measure of love for humankind.” And he speaks of the time of his presence as “day,” and of that before it as “night,” as the Lord also does when he says, “We must work the works of him that sent us while it is day.” This therefore is what he says here: “This is not the time for me to separate myself from the Jews, even though they are unholy. Instead, I must do everything that I can for their healing. For they must not now be punished by having the divine grace (like the light of the sun) withdrawn from them. But just as the light of the day does not fail until the twelve hours have been completed, so the illumination that proceeds from me is not shrouded before the proper time. However, until I am crucified I remain among the Jews, sending forth unto them like light the understanding of the knowledge of God. For since the Jews are in the darkness of unbelief, and so stumble on me as on a stone, I must go back to them and enlighten them so that they may desist from their madness in fighting against God.” Commentary on the Gospel of John 7.

### **Stumbling Without the Light of Christ.**

Athanasius: Consider what I have said, that the Light is Christ. Everyone who will walk in his commandments will not be laid hold of by evil. These twelve hours that are in the day are the twelve apostles. The devil ... is compared with the night. He who walks in the will of the devil will stumble because he does not have the light of Christ. Homily on the Resurrection of Lazarus.

### **The Upright Need Fear No Evil.**

Chrysostom: It is as if Jesus is saying that the upright need fear no evil. It is only the wicked who have cause to fear. We have done nothing worthy of death, and therefore we are in no danger. Or, he is saying,

If any one sees this world's light, he is safe. The one who is with me is even safer. Homilies on the Gospel of John 62.1.

### **11:11 Lazarus Sleeps**

#### **From Jesus' Perspective, Lazarus Was Sleeping.**

Augustine: It was really true that he was sleeping. To his sisters he was dead; to our Lord, he was sleeping. To those who could not raise him again, he was dead. Our Lord awoke him with as much ease from his grave as you might awake a sleeper from his bed. He calls him then "asleep," with reference to his own power, ... as the apostle says, "But I would not have you to be ignorant, concerning those who are asleep." ... Asleep, he says, because he is foretelling their resurrection. And so, all the dead are sleeping, both good and bad. But just as it matters to those who sleep and wake again daily, what they see in their sleep—some having pleasant dreams, others nightmares so scary that they are afraid to fall asleep again in case they reoccur—so it is [in death]. Everyone sleeps and wakes up again in circumstances peculiar to his own situation. Tractates on the Gospel of John 49.9.

#### **Another Enigmatic Statement of Jesus?**

Chrysostom: If anyone asks, "How did the disciples imagine Lazarus was only sleeping? Why didn't they understand that death was meant when Jesus said, 'I go to awake him?' for it was foolishness of them to expect that he would go fifteen stadia to awake him"—we would reply, that they thought this was another one of Jesus' dark sayings, such as he often spoke to them. Homilies on the Gospel of John 62.2.

#### **The Disciples Are Ignorant, but Paul Would Have Known.**

Romanus Melodus:

Again the Lord spoke to his disciples:

"Behold, now, Lazarus, our friend, has fallen asleep,

And I want to go and wake him up."

But they did not understand that the Redeemer spoke of death, then, as sleep.



Indeed if Paul had been there, he would have understood the word of the Word,

For, having been instructed by [Christ],

He sent to his churches epistles

Referring to the dead as those who have fallen asleep.

For who can die if he loves Christ?

How can he fall if he eats him?

He has in his soul

The Sacrament as a phylactery.

Therefore even if he perish,

He will be resurrected

And will rise up saying,

“You are the Life and the Resurrection.”

Kontakion on the Raising of Lazarus 26.6.

### **11:12–13 If Asleep, He Will Recover**

#### **Sleep Exists for One’s Safety.**

Romanus Melodus:

The Creator of all prophesied to the disciples, saying: “Friends and companions, our friend has fallen asleep.”

He was teaching them in advance, mystically,

Because he knows all things as the creator of all things.

“Let us go, then, let us advance and see the strange tomb,

And let us cause the mourning of Mary and Martha to cease

As I raise up Lazarus from the dead,

And, as the Merciful One, have compassion on

The tears of Mary and Martha.”

When they heard these words, all of the apostles as with one voice cried out to the Lord,

“Sleep for human beings is always for their deliverance, not for their destruction.”

And so he spoke to them openly: “He is dead.

As mortal I am away from him. But as God, I know all things.

If we truly arrive at the opportune time,

I will raise the dead, and stop now

The tears of Mary and Martha.”

Kontakion on the Raising of Lazarus 27.4–5.

### **11:14 Lazarus Is Dead**

#### **No Hint Yet of the Miracle to Come.**

Chrysostom: When he said, “He sleeps,” he added, “I go to awake him.” But when he said, “He is dead,” he did not add, “I go to raise him.” For he would not foretell in words what he was about to confirm by his deeds. He is always teaching us not to look for glory and not to make promises without a reason for doing so. Homilies on the Gospel of John 62.2.

### **Physicians Normally Do Everything to Save Life.**

Ephrem the Syrian: All physicians wear themselves out for their patient lest he die. But Lazarus's physician was waiting for his death in order to show his victory over death. Commentary on Tatian's Diatessaron 17.3.

### **Jesus Heals Death.**

Augustine: He had been sent for in order to restore Lazarus from sickness, not from death. But how could the death be hidden from him into whose hands the soul of the dead had flown? Tractates on the Gospel of John 49.11.

### **11:15 For Your Sake I Am Glad I Was Not There**

#### **Christ's Love Would Have Overcome Him.**

Cyril of Alexandria: Here it is as though Jesus says, If I had been there, he would not have died, because I would have had pity on him when he was suffering only a little. But now in my absence his death has taken place, so that, by raising him to life I shall bestow upon you a great advantage through your faith in me. And Christ says this, not to indicate that he is only able to do his divine work when present, but rather to show that if he had been present he would not have been able to neglect helping his friend who was dying. Commentary on the Gospel of John 7.

### **11:16 That We May Die with Him**

#### **Thomas Later Becomes the Most Zealous of All the Disciples.**

Chrysostom: Some say that Thomas himself wanted to die. But this is not the case. The expression is rather one of cowardice. And yet Christ does not rebuke him but instead supports his weakness. The result is that in the end he became stronger than them all—in fact, invincible. For the wonderful thing is this: We see one who was so weak before the crucifixion become more tenacious than any of them after the crucifixion and after he comes to believe in the resurrection. This is how great the power of Christ was. The very man who dared not go in company with Christ to Bethany, the same person, while not seeing Christ, ran practically through the entire inhabited world, living in the midst of nations that were full of murder and wanting to kill him. Homilies on the Gospel of John 62.2.

### **Thomas Expects Death When He Should Expect Life.**

Cyril of Alexandria: There is audacity in Thomas's words, but also timidity. It was the outflow of a devout heart, but it was mixed with a small faith. For he does not endure being left behind and even tries to persuade the others to adopt a similar resolution. Nevertheless, he thinks that they are destined to suffer [death] at the hands of the Jews, even against the will of Christ... He neglects to look at the power of the Deliverer as he should have. And Christ made them timid, by enduring with patience beyond measure the sufferings he did experience at the hands of the Jews. Thomas therefore says that they should not separate themselves from their teacher, although undoubted danger lay before them. So, perhaps with a knowing smile, he said, "Let us go," that is, "Let us die." Or, maybe he meant, If we go, we certainly will die. Nevertheless, let us not refuse to suffer, for that would be too cowardly. Because if he raises from the dead, fear is superfluous seeing that we have someone who is able to raise us again after we have fallen. Commentary on the Gospel of John 7.

### **Thomas Must Die with Jesus in Order to Live with Him.**

Origen: Perhaps Thomas also knew that it would not be possible to live with Jesus except by having died with him, as Paul taught. But those who disagree say that he said this because he suspected the envy of the Jews that would arise from the resurrection of Lazarus, and the ensuing danger. Fragment 79 on the Gospel of John.

### **11:17 Dead for Four Days**

#### **An Accounting of the Four Days.**

Chrysostom: Our Lord had stayed two days, and the messenger had come the day before—the very day on which Lazarus died. This brings us to the fourth day. Homilies on the Gospel of John 62.2.

### **11:18–19 Bethany Was Near Jerusalem**

#### **Why Do Enemies of Christ Console His Friends?**

Chrysostom: "Two miles." This is mentioned to account for so many coming from Jerusalem.... But how could the Jews console the loved ones of Christ, when they had resolved that whoever confessed Christ should be put out of the synagogue? Perhaps the extreme affliction of the sisters excited their sympathy,

or they wished to show respect for their rank. Or perhaps those who came were of the better sort, as we find that many of them believed. Their presence is mentioned to do away with all doubt that Lazarus was really dead. Homilies on the Gospel of John 62.2.

### **11:20 Martha Goes While Mary Stays**

#### **Mary As Allegory of the Soul's Quiet Receptivity.**

Origen: Since Mary is a type of the contemplative life, Martha of the active, Lazarus of him who has fallen into sins after believing, naturally Mary and Martha mourn for Lazarus, and in mourning they need the comfort concerning their brother which the Jews wish to bring them. But before the fullness of time, words despair of being able to make the sister of the dead cease from weeping over him.

Martha seems more eager than Mary, since Martha first ran to Jesus, while Mary remained sitting in the house.... Therefore Martha, who was somewhat inferior in this regard, ran to Jesus while Mary remains in the house to receive him as one who was able to bear his presence. And she would not have gone out from her house if she had not heard her sister say, "The teacher has arrived and is calling you." And she did not simply get up but did so quickly, and falling at Jesus' feet said what she said. The other sister had not fallen at his feet. Fragment 80 on the Gospel of John.

#### **Martha Wants to Speak to Christ Alone.**

Chrysostom: Martha does not take her sister with her because she wants to speak with Christ alone and tell him what has happened. When her hopes had been raised by him, then she went her way and called Mary. Homilies on the Gospel of John 62.3.

### **11:21 Lord, If You Had Been Here**

#### **Christ Was There.**

Andrew of Crete: Do you see her faith? Do you see her undoubting mind? She affirmed in two ways that he was God and the Giver of life, even though she was led astray on account of her simple nature: "If you had been here," she said. What are you saying, Martha? Your reasoning is false. For he was there and he has been and still is present everywhere.... "If you had been here, my brother would not have died." Do

you see how she believed him to be God and able with his power to restrain death and to raise the dead? For she was saying, I know that if you had been here, death would not have prevailed. Homily 8 on Lazarus.

### **Ignorance Concerning Jesus' Divinity.**

Chrysostom: See how great the heavenly wisdom of the women is, although their understanding is weak. For when they saw Christ, they did not break out into mourning and wailing and loud crying, as we do when we see any of those we know coming in on our grief. Rather, immediately they reverence their Teacher. So then both these sisters believed in Christ, but not in a right way. For they did not yet certainly know either that he was God or that he did these things by his own power and authority, although on both points he had taught them. For they showed their ignorance of the former by saying, "If you had been here, our brother would not have died" and of the latter by saying, "Whatever you will ask of God, he will give it to you." Homilies on the Gospel of John 62.3.

### **11:22 Ask, and God Will Give**

#### **Martha Trusts That Jesus Knows What Is Best.**

Augustine: She does not say to him, "Bring my brother to life again." For how could she know that it would be good for him to come to life again? She says, I know that you can do so, if you want to, but what you will do is for your judgment, not for my presumption, to determine. Tractates on the Gospel of John 49.13.

#### **Jesus Leads Martha to Higher Truths.**

Chrysostom: He leads her to the knowledge of higher truths. Even though she had been inquiring only about the resurrection of Lazarus, he tells her of a resurrection in which both she and those with her would share. Homilies on the Gospel of John 62.3.

#### **Martha Is Trying to Believe.**

Peter Chrysologus: This woman does not believe, but she is trying to believe, while her unbelief is disturbing her belief. "Whatever you ask of God..." God gives of his own accord; he does not ask of himself. Why, woman, do you delay in making your request when the one to grant it stands before you? Woman, he is the Judge himself whom you desire merely as an advocate. In him there is the power to give, not the need to make any request. "I know," she says, "that whatever you ask of God, he will give

you.” Woman, to believe this means that you do not believe. To know this means that you do not know. The apostle has indicated this, that the moment when a person thinks that he knows something, he does not know it. Sermon 63.3.

### **11:23–24 The Resurrection on the Last Day**

#### **Her Brother Could Be Raised Here and Now.**

Peter Chrysologus: Martha, again you know but you do not know. Martha, again do you really know, when you do not know that your brother can rise here and now? Or is it perhaps that God who at that future time is able to raise up all is now unable to raise up even one from the dead? He is able, yes, God is able to raise up one from the dead as a sign for this time, God who will later raise up all the dead to eternal life.... Martha, right in front of you is the Resurrection that you are putting so far into the future. Sermon 63.4.

### **11:25 I Am the Resurrection and the Life**

#### **The Voice of Life and Joy That Wakens the Dead.**

Athanasius: I am the voice of life that wakens the dead. I am the good odor that takes away the foul odor. I am the voice of joy that takes away sorrow and grief.... I am the comfort of those who are in grief. Those who belong to me are given joy by me. I am the joy of the whole world. I gladden all my friends and rejoice with them. I am the bread of life. Homily on the Resurrection of Lazarus.

#### **The Old Testament Fathers Are Christ’s Children.**

Irenaeus: If he is not the God of the dead but of the living, yet was called the God of the fathers who were sleeping, they do undoubtedly live to God and have not passed out of existence, since they are children of the resurrection. But our Lord is himself the resurrection, as he himself declares, “I am the resurrection and the life.” But the fathers are his children, for it is said by the prophet: “In the place of ancestors you, O king, shall have sons.” Christ himself, therefore, together with the Father, is the God of the living who spoke to Moses and who was also made known to the fathers. Against Heresies 4.5.2.

## **11:26a Believers Die, Yet Live**

### **Why Do We Not Trust Christ's Words?**

Romanus Melodus:

Having compassion on the tears of Mary and Martha,

You have said to them:

“He will be resurrected and he will rise up,

Saying, ‘You are the life and resurrection.’ ”

In considering the tomb and those in the tomb, we weep,

But we should not. For we do not know where they have come from,

Or where they are now, or who has them.

They have gone from this present life,

Released from its sorrows.

They are at peace,

Awaiting the divine illumination.

The Lover of humanity has them in his charge,

And he has divested them of their temporal clothing

In order that he may clothe them with an eternal body.

Why, then, in vain do we weep?

Why do we not believe Christ, as he cries:



“Whoever believes in me shall not perish,

For even if he knows corruption, after that corruption,

He will be resurrected; he will rise up,

Saying, ‘You are the Life and the Resurrection’ ”?

The faithful person always has power for whatever he wants,

Since he possesses the faith which strengthens all things;

Through faith which is in Christ

He is strengthened for whatever he asks.

This faith is a great possession;

The one who has it, has power over everything.

They had it and were renowned for it—

Both Mary and Martha

Kontakion on the Raising of Lazarus 26.1–2.

### **Believers Are Always Alive.**

Methodius: Here he says believers live; they never die. Their bodies die but are brought back to life again.

On the Resurrection 3.21.6.

### **Faith Is the Life of the Soul.**

Augustine: What does this mean? “He who believes in me, though he were dead.” Just as Lazarus is dead, “yet shall he live,” for he is not the God of the dead but of the living. Such was the answer he gave the Jews concerning their fathers, long ago dead, that is, concerning Abraham and Isaac and Jacob: “I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob: He is not the God of the dead but of the

living. For all live unto him.” Believe then, and though you were dead, yet shall you live; but if you do not believe, even while you are alive you are dead. Let us prove this also by the fact that if you do not believe, though you live you are dead. To one who was delaying to follow him and saying, “Let me first go and bury my father,” the Lord said, “Let the dead bury their dead. But come and follow me.” There was there a dead man needing to be buried, there were there also dead people to bury the dead: the one was dead in the flesh, the others in soul. And how does death come to the soul? When faith is wanting. How does death come to the body? When the soul is wanting. For faith is the life of the soul. Tractates on the Gospel of John 49.15.

### **Living in the Hope of the Resurrection.**

Cyprian: The apostle Paul reproaches and rebukes those who show sorrow for those who have left this world. “I would not,” he says, “like you to be ignorant, my dear brothers and sisters, about those who are sleeping, so that you feel sorrow like those who have no hope. If we believe that Jesus died and rose again, then God will bring those who are asleep in Jesus with him.” Those who show sorrow at the departure of their friends reveal their own lack of hope. But we who live by hope and believe in God and are convinced that Christ suffered for us and that he rose again, who remain with Christ and find our resurrection by him and in him, why should we either show reluctance when we ourselves have to depart or lament and grieve for others who depart as though they were dying forever? Christ himself, our Lord and God, tells us, “I am the resurrection and the life, he that believes in me, though he should die, shall live, and whoever lives and believes in me shall never die.” If we believe in Christ, let us put faith in his words and promises. Since we shall not die once and for all, let us pass into Christ in joy and confidence since we shall live and reign with him forever. On Mortality, 21.

### **The Grace of the General Resurrection.**

Cyril of Alexandria: If anyone notices that even the saints who have received promises of life die, this is no reason for concern, since it is what naturally happens. The display of the grace [of resurrection] has been reserved until the appointed time. This grace is powerful, not partially but effectually, in the case of all, even of those saints who have died in time past and are tasting death for a short time until the general resurrection. For then, together, all will enjoy the good things. Commentary on the Gospel of John 7.

## **11:26b Do You Believe This?**

### **Whether a Question or a Statement.**

Origen: The Savior does not inquire “Do you believe this?” in ignorance as to whether Martha did or did not believe what was said. Rather, he did so in order that we, or indeed those who were then present, might learn from her answer what her disposition was. But another will say that it is not a question but a statement: “You believe this.” In this case, Martha then completes the Savior’s statement saying, Yes, Lord, and not only do I believe what you now say, but I believe now that you are the Christ, something I also believed before. And I believe that you are the Son of God who comes into the world and lives with all who believe in you. Fragment 81 on the Gospel of John.

### **Martha’s “Amen” on Behalf of Lazarus.**

Cyril of Alexandria: Having previously explained the force of the mystery in himself and shown plainly that he is by nature life and true God, he demands assent to the faith, furnishing in this matter a model to the churches. For we should not vainly cast our words into the air when we confess the venerable mystery but rather fix the roots of the faith in heart and mind and then allow it to bear fruit in our confession. And we ought to believe without any hesitation or double-mindedness.... Nevertheless, it is necessary to know that we make the confession of our faith to God, although we are questioned by others, I mean those whose responsibility it is to minister in sacred things, when we say the “I believe” at the reception of holy baptism. Certainly therefore to speak falsely and to slip aside toward unbelief is a most awful thing.... In a certain way, as Lazarus was lying dead, the assent to the faith is demanded of the woman on his behalf. The same can be seen in the churches when a newborn child is brought either to receive the anointing of the catechumenate or to be fully initiated into the Christian faith at holy baptism. In these instances, the person who brings the child repeats aloud the “Amen” on the child’s behalf ... something we also see in the case of Lazarus and his sister. Martha wisely and prudently sows the confession of faith first so that afterward she may reap the fruit of it. Commentary on the Gospel of John 7.

## **11:27 The Christ, the Son of God**

### **Asked One Thing, Answers Another.**

Chrysostom: Martha seems not to have understood his words, that is, she saw that he meant something great but did not see what that was. She is asked one thing and answers another. Yet for a while at least she had this in her favor, that she moderated her grief. Such was the power of the words of Christ. This is why Martha went out first and Mary followed. For their affection for their teacher did not allow them to feel their present sorrow so strongly, so that the minds of these women were truly wise as well as loving. Homilies on the Gospel of John 62.3.

### **Belief in the Son Is Belief in the Resurrection.**

Augustine: When I believed [that you were the Son of God], I believed that you were the resurrection, that you were life and that he that believes in you, though he were dead, shall live. Tractates on the Gospel of John 49.15.

## **11:28 The Teacher Calls for You**

### **No Mention of Where, When or How Jesus Called Mary.**

Augustine: We may observe that the Evangelist has not said where, when or how the Lord called Mary, but for brevity's sake he has left it to be gathered from Martha's words. Tractates on the Gospel of John 49.16.

## **11:29–30 Mary Quickly Comes to Jesus**

### **The One Who Bears the Name of His Mother.**

Peter Chrysologus: When Martha professed her faith in Christ and wiped out by her reverent confession whatever blame there was in womanhood, a message is sent to Mary, because without Mary death could not be banished or life be restored. Let Mary come; let the one who bears the name of his mother come so that humanity might see that as Christ dwelt enclosed in the Virgin's womb, so too to that extent the dead will come forth from the underworld, the dead will come forth from the tombs. Sermon 64.2.

## **11:31 Jews Suppose Mary Goes to Weep at the Tomb**

### **The Providence of God.**

Cyril of Alexandria: The Jews who follow Mary are doing the will of God in order that they might go to see the marvelous deed, even without wishing to do so. Had this not taken place by the providence of God, the Evangelist would not have mentioned it, neither would he have written down the reason they followed Mary to Lazarus's tomb if he had not been continuously zealous for the truth. Thus, he states the reason why many ran to the tomb, and were found there, and became witnesses of the marvelous deed and reported it to others. Commentary on the Gospel of John 7.

### **Mary, the Jews, Christ and We All Weep.**

Peter Chrysologus: Mary weeps, the Jews weep, and Christ also weeps: do you think [all wept] with a similar emotion? So be it that Mary the sister wept since she was unable to hold on to her brother and was unable to prevent his death. Although she was certain about the resurrection, nevertheless, because she was without comfort at the moment, because its delay meant that his absence would be lengthy and because she was sad about his being separated from God, she could not but weep. At the same time since when death appears it is so grim, so morbid, so very cruel, it could not but unsettle and disturb any mind, no matter how full of faith....

The Jews were in tears, being both mindful of their condition and overcome by despair concerning the future life.... As often as one sees a dead person, that often does he lament that he is destined to die. So a mortal cannot but grieve concerning death.

For which of these reasons was Christ weeping? And if for none of them, then why was he in tears? Certainly he is the same one who had said, "Lazarus is dead, and I rejoice." ... When he loses him he sheds no tears, but when he lifts him up it is then that he weeps. He pours out mortal tears just at the time when he is pouring back in the spirit of life. Brothers, the nature of our human body has this tendency, that the force of joy and the force of sorrow both produce tears.... This is why Christ wept, not from grief in the face of death but from calling to mind that happiness when by his own voice, and solely by his voice, he would raise up all the dead to eternal life. Sermon 64.3.

## **11:32 Lord, If You Had Been Here**

## **11:33 Jesus Deeply Moved in Spirit**

### **The Benefits of a Troubled Spirit.**

Diadochus of Photice: Becoming incensed usually spells trouble and confusion for the soul more than any other passion, yet there are times when it greatly benefits the soul. For when with inward calm we direct it against blasphemers or other sinners in order to induce them to mend their ways or at least feel some shame, we make our soul more gentle. In this way we put ourselves completely in harmony with the purposes of God's justice and goodness. In addition, through becoming deeply angered by sin we often overcome weaknesses in our soul. Thus there is no doubt that if, when deeply depressed, we become indignant in spirit against the demon of corruption, this gives us the strength to despise even the presumptuousness of death. In order to make this clear, the Lord twice became indignant against death and troubled in spirit. And despite the fact that, untroubled, he could by a simple act of will do all that he wished, nonetheless when he restored Lazarus's soul to his body he was indignant and troubled in spirit—which seems to me to show that becoming incensed in a controlled manner can be viewed as a weapon implanted in our nature by God when he creates us. If Eve had used this weapon against the serpent, she would not have been impelled by sensual desire. In my view, then, the person who in a spirit of devotion makes controlled use of the power of his anger will without doubt be judged more favorably than the one who ... has never become incensed. The latter seems to have an inexperienced driver in charge of his emotions, while the former, always ready for action, drives the horses of virtue through the midst of the demonic host, guiding the four-horsed chariot of self-control in the fear of God. *On Spiritual Perfection* 62.

### **Jesus' Grief.**

Chrysostom: He comes then to the tomb and again curbed his emotions. Why does the Evangelist carefully mention in several places that "he wept" and that "he groaned"? He mentions these so that you may learn that he had truly put on our nature. For while this Evangelist is remarkable for the great things he says about Christ more than the others in matters relating to the body, [at the passion] he also speaks much more humbly than they. For instance, he says nothing about Jesus' sorrow concerning his death, while the other Evangelists declare that he was exceedingly sorrowful, that he was in fact in an agony. But John, on

the contrary, says that he even threw the officers backwards. The result is that [John] here has made up for what is omitted there by mentioning his grief. Homilies on the Gospel of John 63.2.

### **11:34 Where Have You Laid Him?**

#### **Jesus Asks Not Out of Ignorance.**

Chromatius of Aquileia: When therefore the Lord comes to Mary and Martha the sisters of Lazarus, seeing the crowd of the Jews, he says, "Where have they laid him?" But could the Lord truly be ignorant of where the body of Lazarus was placed, who while being absent at the death of Lazarus had already announced his death and who in his divine majesty was everywhere? But this the Lord did out of ancient custom. For to Adam he had similarly said, "Where are you, Adam?" This was not because he was ignorant of where Adam was but that he might therefore question him so that Adam would openly confess his sin ... It is the same here. He does not ask because he is ignorant of Lazarus's whereabouts but so that the crowd of the Jews would follow him to Lazarus's tomb so that, seeing the divine power of Christ exhibited in the resurrection of Lazarus, they might be exposed as his enemies if they did not believe this display of his power. For the superior Lord said to them, "If you do not believe me, believe the works and know that the Father is in me and I in him." Sermon 27.3.

#### **They Thought Jesus Came to Mourn.**

Chrysostom: Jesus had not yet raised anyone from the dead and seemed as if he came to mourn, not to resurrect him. For the Jews seem to indicate that he was coming to mourn, not to raise him. Homilies on the Gospel of John 63.1.

#### **Seeing, He Pities.**

Augustine: When the Lord sees, he pities, as we read, "Look upon my adversity and misery, and forgive me all my sin." Tractates on the Gospel of John 49.20.

## **11:35 Jesus Wept**

### **Tears at Welcoming Lazarus Back?**

Peter Chrysologus: Christ was deeply agitated with his inner organs all in turmoil, because at this point he was going to raise up only Lazarus and not yet all the dead. Who then could think that Christ shed tears on this occasion out of human weakness when the heavenly Father weeps over the prodigal son, not when he goes away but at the moment when he welcomes him back? And so, Christ shed tears over Lazarus because he was welcoming him back, not because he lost him. And to be sure, it is not when he sees the crowd weeping that Jesus weeps, but when he asks them questions and sees in their responses no trace of faith. Sermon 64.3.

### **He Wept to Teach Us to Weep.**

Augustine: Why did Christ weep except to teach us to weep? Tractates on the Gospel of John 49.19.

### **Jesus Showed There Are Limits to Grief for Christians.**

Basil of Seleucia: Jesus wept by the tomb in order to give a limit for grief to lovers of Christ. By weeping, he ordained a law with his tears. He wept, he did not lament, or wail, or moan, or rend his garments or tear his hair. He defined the bounds of grief [as extending] only as far as the first tears. For why do you weep for a corpse that will be raised? Why do you weep for one who is awaiting the trumpet? Why do you lament as a corpse one who is [merely] sleeping? Why do you trouble one who is in repose with your cries? "Christ is arisen and became the first-fruits of those that slept." On hearing of one who is asleep, do not lament him as a corpse. Moderate your love by means of your tears. Do not offend the one who has experienced the resurrection by weeping immoderately. For it is on this account that he is weeping by the tomb and allowing himself to suffer now, in order that he may expel your grief. Homily on Lazarus 6.

### **Jesus' Mother Gave Him the Gift of Weeping.**

Irenaeus: Why did he come down into [Mary his mother] if he were to take nothing of her? If he had taken nothing of Mary, he ... would never have wept over Lazarus. Against Heresies 3.22.2.



### **Jesus' Tears Are Like the Rain That Waters the Earth.**

Ephrem the Syrian: His tears were like the rain, and Lazarus like a grain of wheat, and the tomb like the earth. He gave forth a cry like that of thunder, and death trembled at his voice. Lazarus burst forth like a grain of wheat. He came forth and adored his Lord who had raised him. Commentary on Tatian's Diatessaron 17.7.

### **11:36 See How He Loved Him!**

#### **Jesus Weeps for All Humanity.**

Cyril of Alexandria: The Jews thought that Jesus wept on account of the death of Lazarus, but in fact he wept out of compassion for all humanity, not mourning Lazarus alone but all of humanity, which is subject to death, having justly fallen under so great a penalty. Commentary on the Gospel of John 7.

### **11:37 Power over Blindness and Death**

#### **Wickedness Even in the Face of Calamity.**

Chrysostom: They do not relax their wickedness even in the face of calamity. And yet, what he was about to do was something far more wonderful. For it is a much greater thing to dispel death that has come and conquered than to ward off death that is imminent. They therefore slander him by those very points through which they ought to have marveled at his power. They allow for the time that he opened the eyes of the blind. And, when they ought to have admired him because of that miracle, they use this latter case as a way to cast a slur upon it, as though it had not even taken place. And not only this ... but even before he has arrived or done anything, they try to prevent him with their accusations without even waiting to see how things will turn out. Homilies on the Gospel of John 63.1.

### **11:38 Jesus Comes to the Tomb**

#### **Groaning in the Face of Death.**

Peter Chrysologus: Spirit groans, so that flesh would come back to life. Life groans, so that death would be put to flight. God groans, so that humanity would rise. Pardon groans, lest the verdict be unfavorable. Christ groans as he subdues death, because one who snatches an unparalleled victory over an enemy

cannot but groan. But with regard to the fact that he said that he “groaned again,” he does groan again in order to provide evidence of a twofold resurrection, since at Christ’s voice just as those dead in body are raised to life from their graves, so too those dead in faithfulness rise to a life of faith. Sermon 65.1.

### **Two Different Groaning of Christ.**

Origen: When he was far from the tomb, he groaned in spirit. But when he comes near to the tomb, he no longer groans in spirit but compresses his groaning in himself.... Again he rebukes the feeling that we may learn that he has become unchangeably human like ourselves. Fragment 84 on the Gospel of John.

### **The Struggle Within.**

Cyril of Alexandria: Here we understand the groaning as if it were the will struggling with a sort of movement according to its power, both because he rather sternly reproved his grief and [because of] the tears that were about to be shed from his grief. For, as God he, in the way of a master, reproves his humanity, looking for it to be strong in sorrowful circumstances.... “He groaned,” which means that through the outward action of his body he indicated his inner distress. Commentary on the Gospel of John 7.

### **Christ Groans Because Faith Groans.**

Augustine: Why did Christ trouble himself except to intimate to you how you should be troubled when you are weighed down and crushed by so great a mass of iniquity? For here you have been looking to yourself, seeing your own guilt, doing an accounting of yourself. I have done this, and God has spared me. I have committed this, and he has still stayed with me. I have heard the gospel and despised it. I have been baptized and returned again to my old habits. What am I doing? Where am I going? How shall I escape? When you speak in this way, Christ is already groaning, for your faith is groaning. In the voice of one who groans like this, the hope of that person’s rising again comes to light. If this kind of a faith is within, Christ is there too, groaning. For if there is faith in us, Christ is in us.... Why did he groan and trouble himself, but to intimate that the faith of one who has just cause to be displeased with himself should be, in a sense, groaning over the accusation of wicked deeds so that the habit of sinning may give way to the vehemence of penitential sorrow? Tractates on the Gospel of John 49.19.

### **The Cave as Prison.**

Peter Chrysologus: It would have sufficed for him to have said that he had come to the tomb. Why is it that the Evangelist makes special mention of the cave? Certainly it is a cave, where the devil's thievery has lodged human beings. It is a cave where a woman's wiles buried the man, a cave where the greediness of death imprisoned God's handiwork. "And a stone had been placed in front of it." The door of hard death was bolted harder still by a very hard stone. What good does weeping at a grave do since the voice of the one weeping does not penetrate such hard and thick barriers? Christians, let us weep before God for our sins, and let us not weep with the pagans before the dead who do not hear us. Sermon 65.2.

### **11:39 Odor of Death After Stone's Removal**

#### **Allegorizing Does Not Have to Deny Historicity.**

Augustine: Although according to the gospel history, we hold that Lazarus was really raised to life, yet I do not doubt that his resurrection is an allegory as well. We do not, because we allegorize facts, however, lose our belief in them as facts. On Eighty-three Varied Questions 65.

#### **Three Deaths, Three Resurrections.**

Augustine: If, then, the Lord in the greatness of his grace and mercy raises our souls to life so that we may not die forever, we may well understand that those three dead persons whom he raised in the body have some figurative significance of that resurrection of the soul that is effected by faith. He raised up the ruler of the synagogue's daughter, while still lying in the house. He raised up the widow's young son, while being carried outside the gates of the city. And he raised up Lazarus when four days in the grave. Let each one pay attention to his own soul: in sinning he dies; sin is the death of the soul. But sometimes sin is committed only in thought. You have felt delight in what is evil, you have assented to its commission, and you have sinned. That assent has killed you, but the death is internal because the evil thought had not yet ripened into action. The Lord intimated that he would raise such a soul to life in raising that girl who had not yet been carried out for burial but was still lying dead in the house as if sin still lay concealed. But if you have not only harbored a feeling of delight in evil but have also done the evil thing, you have, so to speak, carried the dead outside the gate: you are already outside and being carried to the tomb. Yet the Lord also raised such a person to life and restored him to his widowed mother. If you have sinned, repent, and the Lord will raise you up and restore you to your mother church. The third example of death is

Lazarus. It is a horrible kind of death and is distinguished as a habit of wickedness. For it is one thing to fall into sin, another to form the habit of sinning. The one who falls into sin and immediately submits to correction will be quickly restored to life, for he is not yet entangled in the habit, he is not yet laid in the tomb. But whoever has become habituated to sin is buried and has it properly said of him, "he stinks." For his character, like some horrible smell, begins to be of the worst repute. Such are all who are habituated to crime or abandoned in morals. You say to such a person, "Don't act like that." But when will you be listened to by one on whom the earth is thus heaped who is breeding corruption and pressed down with the weight of habit? And yet the power of Christ was not unequal to the task of restoring such a person to life. Tractates on the Gospel of John 49.3.

### **11:40 Faith Sees the Glory of God**

#### **Martha Hindered the Removal of the Stone.**

Origen: But now, between the words "Take away the stone" and "therefore, they took away the stone," the words of the dead man's sister hindered the removal of the stone. And it would not have been taken away at all even later had not Jesus answered and said to her unbelief, "Did I not say to you that if you believe, you will see the glory of God?" It is good, then, that nothing intervenes between Jesus' command and the action enjoined by his bidding. Commentary on the Gospel of John 28.17.

#### **The Faith of One Serving to Assist Another.**

Cyril of Alexandria: Faith is a truly excellent thing when it is produced from an ardent mind. It has such great power that not only is the believer healed but in fact others also can be healed besides those who believe. For instance ... Lazarus is saved by the faith of his sister to whom the Lord said, "If you believe you shall see the glory of God," which is like saying, "Since Lazarus, being dead, is not able to believe, you then are to fill up the faith that is lacking in him that is dead." Commentary on the Gospel of John 7.

### **11:41 The Stone Removed, Jesus Lifts His Eyes in Prayer**

#### **The Storehouse of Life Approaches the Tomb of Death.**

Athanasius: They took, then, the stone there from the mouth of the tomb. The whole crowd marveled, witnessing the smell of pus of Lazarus, who was decayed. He had rotted so that they were not able to

approach within the tomb because of the smell of his body and its decay. But into the midst came Jesus, the storehouse that is full of life, the mouth that is full of sweet odor, the tongue that frightens death, the Mighty One in his commands, the joy of those who are sorrowful, the rising of those who have fallen, the resurrection of the dead, the assembly of the strong, the hope of the hopeless.

He came and stood openly by the mouth of the tomb, with the preparations of salvation in his divine mouth. Now all of the crowd were standing and beholding and wondering what he would do in starting to raise him from the dead. Now the body was lying dead, but God himself was standing over it, looking down on him and grieving for him. Homily on the Resurrection of Lazarus.

### **Pay Attention to the Eyes.**

Origen: We must carefully observe and examine what has been written concerning the position of Jesus' eyes.... He had changed his thought from his conversation with those below and lifted it up and exalted it, bringing it in prayer to the Father who is over all.... The one who imitates Christ's prayer, lifting up the eyes of his soul and bringing them up in this way from everyday concerns, memories, thoughts and intention must in this way address to God the great and heavenly words of prayer concerning great and heavenly matters.... If indeed God makes such a promise for those who pray in a worthy manner ... that "while you are still speaking, I will say, 'Here I am,' " what answer do we think our Savior and Lord would receive? Commentary on the Gospel of John 28.23–25, 39.

### **11:42 A Prayer of Thanks to the Father**

#### **Christ Offers Thanks.**

Origen: He was about to pray for the resurrection of Lazarus when the only good God and Father anticipated his prayer and heard the words about to be spoken in his prayer. So the Savior begins by giving thanks in place of prayer in the hearing of the crowd. Commentary on the Gospel of John 28.42.

#### **A Prayer to Demonstrate Unity of Will.**

Chrysostom: Who ever prayed like Jesus did? Even before uttering any petition, he says, "I thank you that you have heard me," demonstrating that he did not need prayer. He goes on to say, "And I knew that you always hear me," not as though he himself were powerless but to show that his will and the Father's are

one. But then why did he pray? He says he did so “for the sake of the people standing by so that they may believe that you have sent me.” ... All but saying, If I had been an enemy of God, what is done would not have succeeded. Homilies on the Gospel of John 64.2.

### **Those Who Pray Are Always Heard.**

Origen: “I knew that you hear me always,” which is reported by John as said by the Lord, makes clear that those who pray are always heard. On Prayer 13.1.

### **Christ Did Not Need to Pray.**

Hilary of Poitiers: When he was about to restore Lazarus, he prayed to the Father. But he did not need to pray.... “But for the benefit of the people standing nearby I said it, that they may believe that you have sent me.” He prayed then for us so that we might know that he is the Son. His prayer did not benefit himself but benefited our faith. He did not need any help, but we needed instruction. On the Trinity 10.71.

### **Knocking on the Doors of Hell.**

Peter Chrysologus: When Christ began to strike the doors of the underworld, to break through the gates of Tartarus, to open the entrance of death, to dissolve the old law of Gehenna, to do away with the age-old right to punish and to demand the return of Lazarus’s soul, the power of Tartarus with all its fury confronted him, brandishing the edict of the Ruler of heaven, bearing the decree of the King most high, presenting the sentence rendered by the mouth of God and in effect for so many years. And on seeing the man, [Tartarus] asked who [Christ] was, what his intentions were, what his purpose was and why all by himself he was fearlessly challenging and attacking the fearsome entrance to death.

As he asked who he was, the angels serving as ministers of the resurrection answered him in the words of the prophet: “He is the King of glory,” he is “the One who is strong and mighty in battle.” But Tartarus responded, “I know that the King of glory is in charge in heaven of all the celestial powers, and the whole of creation is unable to bear his will. However, this one that I see is one of the earthlings, made out of mud, enclosed in a mortal body, and in his human condition viler than human beings, and, in short, soon to be handed over to the grave and very shortly destined to come under my jurisdiction.”

But the angels persisted and kept repeating, "He is 'the Lord of hosts, he is the king of glory,' he is the Ruler of heaven, the Creator of the earth, the Savior of the world, the Redeemer of all, he is the one who rendered the death sentence that has you in a fury, he is about to tread on your head, crush your authority and issue his own judgment of condemnation on you, who, although ordered to seize the guilty, drag away the innocent, abduct the saints and now threaten the Son of God himself. So give back one before you are forced to release all." Sermon 65.6.

### **A Futile Appeal to Heaven.**

Peter Chrysologus: But Tartarus, still not believing the report he received from the customary messengers, and deploring the situation, with a complaint full of envy makes this appeal to heaven: "O Lord, even though I am the lowest of your creatures, even though I am subjected to grim servitude, I am unfailing in keeping your precepts. I am ever vigilant so that no rash innovator alter the age-old authority of your sentence. But a man has appeared, who is called Christ, bragging that he is your Son, and he reprimands your priests, he rebukes your scribes, he violates your sabbath, he abolishes your law, and he compels souls, released from the flesh and assigned now to my custody for punishment, to return to the bodies in which they had lived wickedly.

"And his audacity, which is growing stronger day by day, has reached the point that he has broken the barriers of the underworld and is attempting to rescue Lazarus, already locked in our prison, already bound by our law and already subject to our authority. Either quickly come to the aid, or, once he opens the doors, you are now going to lose all those whom we have kept in custody for so long a time."

To this the Son from the bosom of his Father responds, "Father, it is just that a prison holds not the innocent but the guilty. That punishment torments the unrighteous, not the righteous. For how long for the offense of one man, on account of Adam's guilt alone, will this executioner continue to drag down to himself with his cruel violence patriarchs, prophets, martyrs, confessors, virgins, widows, those abiding in the chastity of marriage, people of all ages and of both sexes, even little children who do not know good or evil? Father, I shall die so that all may not die. Father, I shall pay Adam's debt so that through me those who die through Adam for the underworld may live for you. Father, because of your sentence I shall shed my blood. That is how important it is to me that your creation should return to you. May the price of my blood so dear to you be the redemption of all the dead."

To this the whole Trinity agreed and ordered Lazarus to leave, and Tartarus was commanded to obey Christ in giving back all the dead. This is why the Son proclaims, “Father, I thank you for having heard me.” The apostle bears witness that Christ is our advocate in the presence of the Father. And so, when he is seated he judges together with the Father. When he stands, he functions in the capacity of advocate. Sermon 65.6–8.

### **11:43 Lazarus, Come Out!**

#### **Come Out!**

Andrew of Crete:

Lazarus, Come out!

It is the voice of the Lord, the proclamation of the king—an authoritative command.

Come out!

Leave corruption behind and receive the flesh of incorruption.

Lazarus, Come out!

Let them know that the time has come when those in the tombs will hear the voice of the Son of man. Once they have heard they will come alive.

Come out!

The stumbling block is taken away.

Come to me—I am calling you.

Come out!

As a friend, I am calling you; as Lord I am commanding you....

Come out



Covered with the burial cloth so that they won't think you were only pretending to be dead. Let them see your hands and feet bound and your face covered. Let them see if they still do not believe the miracle.

Come out!

Let the stench of your body prove the resurrection. Let the burial linen be undone so that they can recognize the one who was put in the tomb.

Come out!

Come alive and enliven! Come out of the tomb. Teach them how all creation will be enlivened in a moment when the trumpet's voice proclaims the resurrection of the dead.

Come out!

Let breath appear in your nostrils, let blood pulse through your veins, let the voice sound in your larynx, let words fill your ears, let vision enlighten your eyes, let the sense of smell fill your senses, walk as nature intended as your earthly tent is enlivened by your soul.

Come out!

Leave behind the burial cloth and glorify the miracle. Leave the revolting stench of death and proclaim the strength of my power.

I'm calling you out!

Come out.

I, who said, "Let there be light, let there be firmament."

Homily 8 on Lazarus.

### **The Voice Longing for Lazarus.**

Hesychius of Jerusalem: The voice longed for Lazarus, its call freeing up the wings of the prisoner so that he rises up from the earth. Homily 11 on St. Lazarus.

### **The Sweet Odor of Paradise Invades the Stench of Death.**

Athanasius: "Come forth." See, I am standing by you. I am your Lord. You are the work of my hands. Why have you not known me, because in the beginning I myself formed Adam from the earth and gave him breath? Open your mouth yourself so that I may give you breath. Stand on your feet and receive strength for yourself. For I am the strength of the whole creation. Stretch out your hands, and I shall give them strength. For I am the straight staff. I command the foul odor to depart from you. For I am the sweet odor of the trees of paradise. Behold, the prophecy of Isaiah the prophet will be fulfilled in you, namely, "I shall open your tombs, and I shall bring you forth." Homily on the Resurrection of Lazarus.

### **The Same Voice That Called Lazarus Will Call Us at the Resurrection.**

Gregory of Nyssa: Here we have a man past the prime of life, a corpse, decaying, swollen, in fact, already in a state of dissolution, so that even his own relatives did not want the Lord to draw near the tomb because the decayed body enclosed there was so offensive. And yet, he is brought into life by a single call, confirming the proclamation of the resurrection, that is to say, that expectation of it as universal that we learn by a particular experience to entertain. For as in the regeneration of the universe the apostle tells us that "the Lord himself will descend with a shout, with the voice of the archangel," and by a trumpet sound raise up the dead to incorruption—so now too he who is in the tomb, at the voice of command, shakes off death as if it were only sleep. He rids himself of the corruption that had come on his condition of a corpse, leaps forth from the tomb whole and sound, not even hindered as he leaves by the bonds of the grave cloths round his feet and hands. On the Making of Man 25.11.

### **Divine Power of the Father and Son.**

Chrysostom: Why did he not say, "In the name of my Father come out"? Or why not, "Father, raise him up"? Why did he omit all these expressions and, after assuming the attitude of one praying, show by his actions his independent authority? Because this was also a mark of his wisdom: to show condescension by his words but power by his deeds. For since [the Jewish leaders] had nothing else to charge him with except that he was not of God, and since in this way they deceived many, for this reason he more than sufficiently proves this very point by what he says in a way their weakness required. For it was in his power to show in another way his agreement with the Father as well as his own dignity, but the multitude could not ascend so far. And so he simply says, "Lazarus, come forth." Homilies on the Gospel of John 64.2.

## **11:44 Lazarus Comes Out and Is Unbound**

### **Come Out of the Hiding of Your Sin.**

Augustine: Do you wonder how it is that he came forth with his feet bound, but forget about the fact that after four days he rose from the dead? In both events it was the power of the Lord that operated and not the strength of the dead. He came forth and yet was still bound. Still in his burial shroud, he has already come outside the tomb. What does it mean? When you despise [Christ], you lie dead.... When you confess, you come forth. For what is to come forth, but to come out, as it were, from your hiding place and show yourself? But you cannot make this confession unless God moves you to do it, by crying with a loud voice, that is, calling you with abundant grace. But even after the dead man has come forth, he remains bound for some time, that is, he is as yet only a penitent. Then our Lord says to his ministers, "Loose him, and let him go," that is, forgive his sins: "Whatever you shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." Tractates on the Gospel of John 49.24.

### **Unbound from Sin.**

Irenaeus: Concerning Lazarus, who had lain four days in the tomb: In what [body did he] rise again? In the same, no doubt, in which he had also died. For if it were not in the very same [body], then certainly he who had died did not rise again.... "The dead man came out, his hands and feet bound with strips of cloth." This was symbolic of that man who had been bound in sins. And therefore the Lord said, "Unbind him, and let him go." Therefore, since those who were healed were made whole in those members that had in times past been afflicted, and the dead rose in the identical bodies, their limbs and bodies receiving health, so also that life that was granted by the Lord who prefigures eternal things by temporal ones shows that it is he who is himself able to extend both healing and life to his handiwork so that his words concerning its [future] resurrection may also be believed. Against Heresies 5.13.1.

### **The Church Unbinds.**

Augustine: So someone says, "What's the use of the church, if you can confess, and be brought back to life by the voice of the Lord and come out immediately?" "What use is the church to you as you confess—the church to which the Lord said, 'What you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven?' " Look at Lazarus's case. He came out, all tied up. He was already alive, by confessing, but he was not yet walking around freely, being still entangled with the bandages. So what does the church do, told as it has been, "Whatever

you loose shall be loosed”? The church does what the Lord went on at once to tell the disciples, of course: “Unbind him and let him go.” Sermon 67.3.

### **The Land of Dead Prayer.**

Origen: Now, we ought to be aware that there are some Lazaruses even now who, after they have become Jesus’ friends, have become sick and died, and as dead persons they have remained in the tomb and the land of the dead with the dead who were later made alive by Jesus’ prayer. They were summoned from the tomb to the things outside it by Jesus with his loud voice. He who trusts in Jesus comes forth wearing bonds worthy of death from his former sins and still bound around his face, so that he can neither see nor walk nor do anything because of the bonds of death until Jesus commands those who are able to loose him and let him go. Commentary on the Gospel of John 28.54.

### **Death Itself Cast into Affliction.**

Basil of Seleucia: Lazarus appeared, resembling an impromptu trophy over death. He appeared without having left to Hades any of the burial wrappings. For, bound [in these], he came forth. His feet did not bear him, rather, grace provided him with wings. Lazarus appeared, having left Hades behind mourning. As he put an end to the grief of [his] brothers, he cast death into affliction.

Seeing his kingdom destroyed and unable to prevent this, [death] lamented, crying, “What is this change in my affairs, what is this miraculous alliance of nature? The dead are returning to life, and the tombs have become wombs of the living. Alas, for these misfortunes! Even the tombs are faithless to me with regard to the dead, and the dead, although putrefying, are leaping out. They are all dancing in their swathing bands, mocking my laugh. Still mourned, they are going up toward those that mourn them. By showing themselves, they undo the tragedy, leaving me an heir to grief. Who is it who teaches the dead to challenge death? Who is it who is enlisting the deceased against death? Who is the One whose voice the prisons underground cannot support? Who is the One before whom the tombs tremble? He merely speaks, and I am not able to hold on to those whom I have in my power. Oh, in vain was I entrusted with a kingdom! Oh, in vain was I confident in an angry God! Homily on Lazarus 11–12.

### **Lazarus's Sip of the Resurrection.**

Peter Chrysologus: Pray, brothers, that we who have taken a sip of the resurrection with Lazarus offering the toast at Christ's return may merit drinking the whole draft of the universal resurrection. Sermon 65.9.