

WEEK OF AUGUST 16, 2026

**5-Day Devotional
based on Sunday's message:**

Do You Believe This?
John 11:1-44

Provided by



AKRON GRACE CHURCH
101 N. 7th Street, Akron PA
www.akrongrace.com

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John 11:1–44 (NLT)

A man named Lazarus was sick. He lived in Bethany with his sisters, Mary and Martha. This is the Mary who later poured the expensive perfume on the Lord's feet and wiped them with her hair. Her brother, Lazarus, was sick. So the two sisters sent a message to Jesus telling him, "Lord, your dear friend is very sick." But when Jesus heard about it he said, "Lazarus's sickness will not end in death. No, it happened for the glory of God so that the Son of God will receive glory from this." So although Jesus loved Martha, Mary, and Lazarus, he stayed where he was for the next two days. Finally, he said to his disciples, "Let's go back to Judea." But his disciples objected. "Rabbi," they said, "only a few days ago the people in Judea were trying to stone you. Are you going there again?" Jesus replied, "There are twelve hours of daylight every day. During the day people can walk safely. They can see because they have the light of this world. But at night there is danger of stumbling because they have no light." Then he said, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but now I will go and wake him up." The disciples said, "Lord, if he is sleeping, he will soon get better!" They thought Jesus meant Lazarus was simply sleeping, but Jesus meant Lazarus had died. So he told them plainly, "Lazarus is dead. And for your sakes, I'm glad I wasn't there, for now you will really believe. Come, let's go see him." Thomas, nicknamed the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, "Let's go, too—and die with Jesus." When Jesus arrived at Bethany, he was told that Lazarus had already been in his grave for four days. Bethany was only a few miles down the road from Jerusalem, and many of the people had come to console Martha and Mary in their loss. When Martha got word that Jesus was coming, she went to meet him. But Mary stayed in the house. Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if only you had been here, my brother would not have died. But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask." Jesus told her, "Your brother will rise again." "Yes," Martha said, "he will rise when everyone else rises, at the last day." Jesus told her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Anyone who believes in me will live, even after dying. Everyone who lives in me and believes in me will never ever die. Do you believe this, Martha?" "Yes, Lord," she told him. "I have always believed you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one who has come into the world from God." Then she returned to Mary. She called Mary aside from the mourners and told her, "The Teacher is here and wants to see you." So Mary immediately went to him. Jesus had stayed outside the village, at the place where Martha met him. When the people who were at the house consoling Mary saw her leave so hastily, they assumed she was going to Lazarus's grave to weep. So they followed her there. When Mary arrived and saw Jesus, she fell at his feet and said, "Lord, if only you had been here, my brother would not have died." When Jesus saw her weeping and saw the other people wailing with her, a deep anger welled up within him, and he was deeply troubled. "Where have you put him?" he asked them. They told him, "Lord, come and see." Then Jesus wept.

John 11:1–44 (NLT)

The people who were standing nearby said, “See how much he loved him!” But some said, “This man healed a blind man. Couldn’t he have kept Lazarus from dying?” Jesus was still angry as he arrived at the tomb, a cave with a stone rolled across its entrance. “Roll the stone aside,” Jesus told them. But Martha, the dead man’s sister, protested, “Lord, he has been dead for four days. The smell will be terrible.” Jesus responded, “Didn’t I tell you that you would see God’s glory if you believe?” So they rolled the stone aside. Then Jesus looked up to heaven and said, “Father, thank you for hearing me. You always hear me, but I said it out loud for the sake of all these people standing here, so that they will believe you sent me.” Then Jesus shouted, “Lazarus, come out!” And the dead man came out, his hands and feet bound in graveclothes, his face wrapped in a headcloth. Jesus told them, “Unwrap him and let him go!”

Day 1: When Love Does Not Look Like Immediate Action

Opening Connection

Imagine learning that someone you love is seriously ill. You reach out to the one person you believe can make a difference. Then you wait. No answer. No change. As the situation worsens, the delay begins to feel less like waiting and more like being forgotten. Have you ever interpreted someone's delay as evidence that they did not care?

Devotional

Mary and Martha sent Jesus a simple message, the one He loved was very sick. They knew Jesus loved Lazarus, and they knew He had the power to heal. Yet, Jesus remained where He was for two more days. John places two truths beside each other. Jesus loved Martha, Mary, and Lazarus, and yet Jesus delayed. From the sisters' perspective, those truths may have seemed impossible to hold together. By the time Jesus arrived, Lazarus was dead. Jesus knew more than the family or the disciples understood. He said that the situation would reveal God's glory and strengthen belief. The passage does not suggest that every delay will be explained to us. It reveals that Jesus' love remains true even when His timing is beyond our understanding. The disciples also saw only danger in returning to Judea. Jesus saw the work the Father had placed before Him. Everyone around Jesus possessed only part of the picture, but Jesus moved with purpose.

Bible Verse

"A man named Lazarus was sick. He lived in Bethany with his sisters, Mary and Martha. This is the Mary who later poured the expensive perfume on the Lord's feet and wiped them with her hair. Her brother, Lazarus, was sick. So the two sisters sent a message to Jesus telling him, 'Lord, your dear friend is very sick.' But when Jesus heard about it he said, 'Lazarus's sickness will not end in death. No, it happened for the glory of God so that the Son of God will receive glory from this.' So although Jesus loved Martha, Mary, and Lazarus, he stayed where he was for the next two days. Finally, he said to his disciples, 'Let's go back to Judea.' But his disciples objected. 'Rabbi,' they said, 'only a few days ago the people in Judea were trying to stone you. Are you going there again?' Jesus replied, 'There are twelve hours of daylight every day. During the day people can walk safely. They can see because they have the light of this world. But at night there is danger of stumbling because they have no light.' Then he said, 'Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but now I will go and wake him up.' The disciples said, 'Lord, if he is sleeping, he will soon get better!' They thought Jesus meant Lazarus was simply sleeping, but Jesus meant Lazarus had died. So he told them plainly, 'Lazarus is dead. And for your sakes, I'm glad I wasn't there, for now you will really believe. Come, let's go see him.' Thomas, nicknamed the Twin,^c said to his fellow disciples, 'Let's go, too—and die with Jesus.' - John 11:1-16 (NLT)

Reflection Question

What does this section reveal about the love, timing, and purposes of Jesus? Where might you be interpreting a delay as indifference, and how will you respond to what this passage reveals?

Today's Practice

Read John 11:1–16 a second time. Notice every reference to love, glory, belief, timing, and death. Ask, "God, what are You revealing to me here? How will I respond to this truth?"

Prayer

Jesus, help me see You as You reveal Yourself in this passage. Where I do not understand Your timing, guard me from conclusions that contradict Your character. Show me what You want me to notice and how You are inviting me to respond. Amen.

Day 2: Do You Believe This?

Opening Connection

Imagine sitting across from a doctor who assures you, “I can cure this illness,” and then begins explaining a procedure you do not fully understand. You understand the promise, but not how the doctor intends to accomplish it. Before the procedure begins, you must decide whether you trust the person making the promise. When have you had to trust someone before you fully understood what they were doing?

Devotional

Martha met Jesus with words that carried both faith and grief. “Lord, if only you had been here, my brother would not have died.” She believed Jesus could have healed Lazarus, but she could not understand why He had not come sooner. When Jesus told her that Lazarus would rise again, Martha affirmed the future resurrection. Her theology was correct, but Jesus brought the truth closer. He did not merely claim to teach resurrection or to give life. He declared, “I am the resurrection and the life.” Then Jesus asked, “Do you believe this, Martha?” He did not ask whether she understood His delay or knew what would happen next. He asked whether she trusted the Person He had revealed Himself to be. Martha confessed that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and the One who has come into the world from God. She made that confession before she knew Lazarus would leave the tomb. Her faith rested in Jesus’ identity while her understanding remained incomplete.

Bible Verse

“When Jesus arrived at Bethany, he was told that Lazarus had already been in his grave for four days. Bethany was only a few miles down the road from Jerusalem, and many of the people had come to console Martha and Mary in their loss. When Martha got word that Jesus was coming, she went to meet him. But Mary stayed in the house. Martha said to Jesus, “Lord, if only you had been here, my brother would not have died. But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask.” Jesus told her, “Your brother will rise again.” “Yes,” Martha said, “he will rise when everyone else rises, at the last day.” Jesus told her, “I am the resurrection and the life. Anyone who believes in me will live, even after dying. Everyone who lives in me and believes in me will never ever die. Do you believe this, Martha?” “Yes, Lord,” she told him. “I have always believed you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one who has come into the world from God.” — John 11:17-27 (NLT)

Refection Question

What does Jesus reveal about Himself? What did Martha believe before she understood His next action? Where is the question Jesus asked Martha, “Do you believe this?” becoming personal for you? How will you respond?

Today’s Practice

Read John 11:17–27 again. Write down every statement Martha makes about the future, her circumstances, and Jesus. Then write Jesus’ question by itself, “Do you believe this?” Sit with the question before trying to answer it quickly.

Prayer

Jesus, You are the resurrection and the life. Reveal where my understanding has become a condition for trusting You. Help me hear Your question honestly and show me how belief in who You are should shape my response. Amen.

Day 3: The God Who Enters Our Grief

Opening Connection

Remember a time when you were hurting and someone tried to comfort you. They may have felt pressure to fill the silence with quick explanations or familiar phrases, but shallow words can make grief feel even lonelier. Often the greater comfort comes from someone who simply stays with you, sits beside you, listens without forcing an answer, and helps fill the emptiness or fear with their presence. Sometimes another person's presence says what words cannot, and that is you do not have to face this alone. What has helped you feel genuinely seen during a season of grief or pain?

Devotional

Mary came to Jesus with the same words Martha had spoken, "Lord, if only you had been here, my brother would not have died." Her grief came through tears rather than extended conversation. The mourners around her also wept. Jesus knew that Lazarus would soon walk out of the tomb. Still, He did not stand at a safe emotional distance. John tells us that Jesus was deeply moved and troubled. Then Jesus wept. His tears reveal genuine compassion. His deep disturbance also shows that death is not a harmless or natural friend. Death tears apart what God created for life. Jesus entered the family's sorrow while moving toward a confrontation with the grave. The crowd could recognize His love, but some could only ask why He had not prevented the death. They could imagine Jesus healing the living. They had not yet imagined authority over the dead.

Bible Verse

"Then she returned to Mary. She called Mary aside from the mourners and told her, "The Teacher is here and wants to see you." So Mary immediately went to him. Jesus had stayed outside the village, at the place where Martha met him. When the people who were at the house consoling Mary saw her leave so hastily, they assumed she was going to Lazarus's grave to weep. So they followed her there. When Mary arrived and saw Jesus, she fell at his feet and said, "Lord, if only you had been here, my brother would not have died." When Jesus saw her weeping and saw the other people wailing with her, a deep anger welled up within him, and he was deeply troubled. "Where have you put him?" he asked them. They told him, "Lord, come and see." Then Jesus wept. The people who were standing nearby said, "See how much he loved him!" But some said, "This man healed a blind man. Couldn't he have kept Lazarus from dying?" -John 11:28-37 (NLT)

Reflection Question

What do Jesus' tears and deep emotion reveal about His response to human grief and death? What is God revealing about your own grief or your response to someone else's pain? How will you respond

Today's Practice

Read John 11:28-37 slowly. Pay attention to every emotion, question, movement, and response. Ask God what this scene reveals about His heart and what it reveals about people

Prayer

Jesus, thank You for entering human sorrow. Reveal what I need to see about Your compassion and Your response to death. Meet me in the places where I grieve, and show me how this revelation should shape my life. Amen.

Day 4: When Belief Reaches the Stone

Opening Connections

Imagine a physical therapist asking you to put weight on an injured leg for the first time. Everything in you resists because you remember the pain. You may trust the therapist's knowledge, but that trust becomes visible only when you take the step. When has trusting someone required you to act before you knew the outcome?

Devotional

Jesus stood before Lazarus's tomb and commanded, "Roll the stone aside." Martha immediately objected. Lazarus had been dead four days. Opening the tomb would expose the odor and undeniable reality of death. Earlier, Martha had confessed Jesus as the Messiah and Son of God. Now that confession met a command she did not understand. Her visible circumstances told her that opening the tomb was unreasonable. Jesus reminded her that belief would lead to seeing God's glory. Martha's hesitation does not erase her confession. It reveals that faith can be sincere and still developing. Belief is not merely agreeing with what Jesus has said. It begins to shape how we respond when His word confronts what seems obvious to us. The people could remove the stone, but they could not give Lazarus life. Actionable belief does not mean controlling the result. It means responding to what Jesus has revealed and entrusting to Him what only He can do.

Bible Verse

"Jesus was still angry as he arrived at the tomb, a cave with a stone rolled across its entrance. "Roll the stone aside," Jesus told them. But Martha, the dead man's sister, protested, "Lord, he has been dead for four days. The smell will be terrible." Jesus responded, "Didn't I tell you that you would see God's glory if you believe?" So they rolled the stone aside. Then Jesus looked up to heaven and said, "Father, thank you for hearing me. You always hear me, but I said it out loud for the sake of all these people standing here, so that they will believe you sent me." — John 11:38-42 (NLT)

Reflection Question

What does Martha's objection reveal about the tension between genuine belief and incomplete understanding? What truth has God revealed that may be calling for a response from you? How will you respond without trying to control the outcome?

Today's Practice

Read John 11:38-42 several times. Notice Jesus' command, Martha's objection, Jesus' reminder, the people's response, and Jesus' prayer. Ask, "What has God revealed? What do I believe? Is there a response He is bringing to my attention?" Do not force an answer, but listen prayerfully.

Prayer

Jesus, show me where my stated beliefs and my lived responses are separated. Reveal what You want me to trust and where You are inviting me to act. Teach me to obey without trying to control what belongs to You. Amen.

Day 5: The Voice That Calls The Dead To Life

Opening Connection

Think about being separated from someone you trust in a crowded place. Many voices surround you, but then you hear one familiar voice call your name. That voice cuts through the confusion because you know who is calling. The fear begins to lift because the voice tells you that you have been found. Whose voice would you recognize anywhere? What makes that voice distinct to you?

Devotional

After the stone was removed, Jesus prayed so that the crowd would understand His relationship with the Father and believe that the Father had sent Him. The sign was never meant to draw attention only to the event. It revealed the identity of Jesus. Then Jesus called Lazarus by name, “Lazarus, come out!” This was not a general announcement to the crowd. The personal call of the friend who loved Lazarus carried authority into the tomb itself. The dead man heard the voice of Jesus and came out. The people could remove the grave clothes, but only Jesus could call the dead to life. Lazarus returned to mortal life and would one day die again. Yet, this sign revealed that death itself is subject to the authority of Jesus. It also pointed forward to the greater victory of Jesus’ own death and resurrection. Many voices surrounded Lazarus’s tomb, voices of grief, questions, and uncertainty. However, the decisive voice belonged to Jesus. When He called Lazarus by name, even death had to release him. The story leaves every reader among the witnesses, facing the question Jesus asked before the stone was moved, “Do you believe this?”

Bible Verse

“So they rolled the stone aside. Then Jesus looked up to heaven and said, “Father, thank you for hearing me. You always hear me, but I said it out loud for the sake of all these people standing here, so that they will believe you sent me.” Then Jesus shouted, “Lazarus, come out!” And the dead man came out, his hands and feet bound in graveclothes, his face wrapped in a headcloth. Jesus told them, “Unwrap him and let him go!” — John 11:41-44 (NLT)

Reflection Question

What does Jesus calling Lazarus by name reveal about both His personal love and His authority over death? After rereading the whole story this week, what has God revealed to you? How will you respond in belief and obedience?

Today’s Practice

Read John 11:1–44 in one sitting. Then retell the story in your own words. Ask the four Discovery Bible Study questions. What stands out? What does this reveal about God? What does this reveal about people? What have I learned, and how will I respond?

Prayer

Father, thank You for revealing Your glory through Your Son. Jesus, You are the resurrection and the life. Bring together everything You have shown me in this story. Make my belief more than agreement, and reveal the response of obedience You are asking from me. Amen.