

## DEATH STINKS

(John 11:45)

Intro: Death stinks.  
-Literally.  
-Figuratively.

### I. Oh, My, Does Death Stink!

#### A. It Stunk When I Was A Child.

1. When I was growing up and going to Sunday School.
  - a. One year my class was assigned:
    - To the science room.
    - #In our parochial school.
  - b. As we entered the room in September.
    - After three months of summer vacation.
    - There was this:
      - #Horrible.
      - #Putrid.
      - \*Smell.
    - Odor was almost unbearable.
  - c. I complained to my dad.
    - Who was the pastor.
    - About the ungodly smell in our Sunday School room.
  - d. He checked it out.
    - Smelled the smell.
    - Opened the window.
    - Aired out the room.
    - #That was it.
  - e. Until the next Sunday.
    - When we went back to Sunday School.
    - There was the same nauseating smell.
  - f. Again I complained.
    - Threatening not to go back to Sunday School.
    - #Until the room was deodorized.
    - Again the windows were opened.
    - #Room was aired out.
    - Air freshener was generously sprayed throughout the room.
    - #Stench remained.

- g. It was decided that the room needed to be thoroughly cleaned out.
  - School equipment.
    - #Stored in the room over summer.
    - #Moved out.
  - What do you suppose we found?
    - #Hamster.
    - #Gerbil.
      - \*Used in one of the science classes.
      - \*Forgotten over the summer.
      - \*Buried behind a pile of equipment and school supplies.
      - \*Three-months dead.
      - \*Stinking to high heaven.

2. Death stinks.

B. The Death Of Lazarus Stunk.

- 1. He may have been the sole source of support for his family.
  - a. He had two sisters.
    - Mary.
    - Martha.
  - b. But women in Biblical times didn't ordinarily:
    - Work outside the home.
    - Own businesses.
    - Have careers.
  - c. There is no mention of:
    - Parents.
    - Others relatives.
  - d. Mary and Martha may have lost their meal ticket.
    - That stinks.
    - It stinks.
      - #When companies downsize.
      - #When plants move or close.
      - #When employees get laid off.
      - #When someone loses their meal ticket.
        - \*Because of divorce.
          - +Or a broken relationship.
        - \*That can seem like death.
          - +Or a form of death.
  - e. Death stinks.
- 2. It could have been avoided.
  - a. Lazarus was sick.
    - But not all sickness results in death.
    - Mary and Martha sent for the best doctor they knew.
      - #Great Physician.
      - #Jesus.

- b. Jesus was out of the country.
- He had left Judea.
    - #After a threat on his life.
      - \*John 10: 31.
  - When he got the:
    - #Phone call.
    - #Or maybe it was a telegram.
      - \*From West Bank Union.
      - \*Informing him of Lazarus' illness.
  - It would have been risky for him to go back to Judea.
- c. But he didn't have to go back.
- He could have healed Lazarus from a distance.
  - He had done it before.
    - #Remember the Roman centurion in Capernaum?
      - \*Matthew 8:5-13.
      - \*Luke 7:1-10.
        - +Whose servant was sick in bed.
        - +Who begged Jesus for help.
    - #Jesus said:
      - \*"I'll be right over."
    - #Centurion said:
      - \*"No."
      - \*"You don't have to do that."
      - \*"I know how this works."
      - \*"I'm a man under authority."
      - \*"I have others under my authority."
      - \*"All you have to do is give the orders."
      - \*"You don't have to come."
      - \*"Just say the word."
    - #Jesus said:
      - \*"OK."
      - \*"Consider it done."
    - #Servant was healed.
  - So Jesus didn't have to go back to Judea.
    - #To heal Lazarus.
  - But instead he did nothing.
    - #For two days Jesus did nothing.
- d. By the time Jesus decided to go back, Lazarus was dead.
- Jesus' disciples thought he was crazy to go back.
    - #"Are you nuts?"
    - #"Don't you remember what just happened back there?"
    - #"Those people want to kill you."

- \*Only Thomas voiced a differing opinion.
    - +Thomas gets enough bad press.
      - =From the story in John 20: 24-29.
        - Where he is Doubting Thomas.
        - Where he refuses to believe.
          - #In the resurrection of Jesus.
          - #Until he has "Show and Tell."
      - +Here Thomas should get some good press.
        - =It is Thomas and Thomas alone who says:
          - "Come on, guys, let's go back."
          - "Even if we have to die with him."
  - Mary and Martha weren't too crazy about Jesus' return, either.
    - # "Where have you been?"
    - # "What took you so long?"
    - # "If only you had been here earlier,"
      - \* "Our brother would not have died."
  - Some of the Jews even got on Jesus' case.
    - # "Hey, he healed a blind man."
      - \* "Whom he didn't even know."
    - +John 9: 1-41.
      - # "You'd think he could have done something for Lazarus."
        - \* "Whom he loved."
      - # "You'd think he could have kept him from dying."
- e. Death stinks.
3. Lazarus stunk.
  - a. He had been in the grave for four days.
    - It didn't take three months for a corpse to begin to stink.
      - #That began to happen pretty quickly.
    - Judeans didn't have a process for:
      - #Embalming.
      - #Mummification.
        - \*Like the Egyptians did.
  - b. Burials happened right away.
    - Often the same day.
    - To get rid of the smell.
  - c. Wake would happen later.
    - Sometimes for 7 days.
    - Sometimes for as much as 30 days.
      - #Time it took.
        - \*For news of the death to get around.
        - \*For people to come and pay their respects.
  - d. After four days in the grave.
    - Body would have begun to decompose and smell.
  - e. Death stinks.

C. Jesus Would Have Stunk.

1. After his death.
  - a. Don't think he wouldn't.
  - b. Between:
    - Blood-soaked hair.
    - Sweat and dirt-stained skin.
    - Decaying flesh.
    - #Jesus would have stunk.
2. That's why there were burial spices.
  - a. In John's Gospel.
    - Joseph of Arimathea
    - Nicodemus.
    - #Wrap Jesus' body with 100 pounds of:
      - \*Myrrh.
      - \*Aloes.
      - +During the burial.
      - =John 19: 38-40.
    - #It's to mask the smell.
  - b. In Mark and Luke.
    - Women are headed for the grave on Easter morning.
    - #Mark 16: 1.
    - #Luke 24: 1
    - To do the same thing.
    - #To anoint Jesus' body with spices.
    - #To cover the smell.
3. Death stinks.

II. So How Do We Get Rid Of The Smell Of Death?

A. We Don't.

1. We try.
  - a. We open the windows.
    - Spray deodorant.
  - b. We bury hamsters.
    - And gerbils.
  - c. We bury people.
    - Or cremate them.
  - d. We give away clothes.
    - Or change the bedding.
  - e. We paint the walls.
    - Or sell the house.

2. But there's something about death that continues to linger.
  - a. It not just:
    - Smell.
    - Memories.
  - b. It's sin.
    - “Wages of sin is death.”
    - #Romans 6:23.
    - It's sin.
      - #Brings death.
        - \*To our loved ones.
        - \*To us.
      - #Brought death.
        - \*To Lazarus.
        - \*To Jesus.
          - #Not his sin.
          - #But ours.
3. We don't have what it takes.
  - a. To get rid of the smell of sin.
  - b. To get rid of the smell of death.

#### B. It Takes The Breath Of God.

1. To breathe new life into the dry bones of Israel.
  - a. Ezekiel was a prophet during the Babylonian Captivity.
    - People of Israel were exiled in Babylon.
    - #For 50 years.
    - Punishment from God for their:
      - #Disobedience.
      - #Unbelief.
  - b. There were a lot of bones.
    - Bones of soldiers who had died.
      - #Fighting the Babylonian armies.
    - Bones of the exiles.
      - #Who had died during 50 years of slavery.
  - c. God breathed life into those bones.
    - Breath of resurrection.
    - Breath of forgiveness.
    - Breath of freedom.
      - #Blows the people of Israel.
        - \*All the way home.
        - \*All the way back to Jerusalem.
  - d. It takes the breath of God.

2. To breathe new life into Lazarus.
  - a. Who has been dead for four days.
    - Some rabbis thought.
    - #Soul of a dead person.
    - \*Hovered around the body for three days.
    - After four days.
    - #There's nothing left but a stinking body.
  - b. Until Jesus breathes:
    - New life.
    - Resurrection.
    - #Through his words:
      - \*"Lazarus, come forth."
  - c. It takes the breath of God.
3. To breathe the new life of faith into:
  - a. Mary and Martha.
  - b. Judeans.
  - c. Jesus' own disciples.
    - Why did Jesus wait two days?
      - #Before going back to Judea.
    - So that his disciples might believe.
      - #John 11:15.
    - So that Mary and Martha might believe.
    - So that the Judeans might believe.
  - d. It takes the breath of God.
4. To breathe the new life of faith into us.
  - a. Why did Jesus lie in the grave for three days?
    - So that you may believe.
  - b. Why did God breathe life back into Jesus on Easter morning?
    - So that you may believe.
    - #In the one who removes the smell.
    - \*Sin.
    - \*Death.
    - #In the one who raises the dead to life.
    - #In the one who says:
      - \*"I am the resurrection and the life."
      - \*"Those who believe in me,"
        - #"Even though they die, will live,"
      - \*"And everyone who lives and believes in me"
        - #"Will never die."
      - \*"Do you believe this?"
        - #John 11:25-26.

Concl: Do you believe?





