**Thesis:** It’s a powerfully moving thought that Jesus can relate to us completely. Choosing to become completely human, Jesus understands us on every level. The intricacies of our thoughts, the complexities of our emotions, and even the depths of our heartache. As a man, Jesus empathizes with us. As God, he also empowers us to seek God through every circumstance.

**Introduction:** You’re listening to The Jesus Podcast, a year of stories showcasing the depth of Christ’s love and the glory of God’s truth. I’m \_\_\_\_ your host from Pray.com. I’m so glad to be with you today. Take a second to follow the podcast as we finish with our last episode on miracles of the Messiah.

**Context:** Two days after Jesus hears that his dear friend Lazarus is sick, he and the disciples travel to Bethany, the small town outside of Jerusalem. There he’ll meet with Mary and Martha. Our story today is a heart wrenching account, placing us in the middle of the loss of a loved one. Many of us know the incredible pain, confusion, and emotional turmoil associated with this kind of suffering. But nobody knows it better than Jesus, the giver of life. When Jesus spoke the world into existence, all things fell in glad submission to its Creator. But through the sin of man came brokenness in all things, even life itself. Though death is what we consider to be a natural part of life, it was never God’s hope for the creation he called very good. The story of Lazarus highlights God’s tender mercy, his heart of compassion, and ultimately his desire to conquer sin and death while giving life to all those who believe in him.

**Message:** In the second part of the story of Lazarus, we get to witness one of the few miracles of Jesus raising someone from the dead. As a whole, Lazarus’ resurrection is a perfect example of the gospel - the good news of life in Jesus. It’s a reminder that good news is only good because it’s preceded by bad news. But if we keep our eyes on Jesus, he can take even our most dire and bleak circumstances and use them as a display of his glory and a picture of how life flourishes in his presence.

When Jesus arrives in Bethany, Mary and Martha are still overwhelmed by the bad news that Lazraus has died. To them, Jesus was too late and hope of being with the brother in this lifetime was all but lost. It’s this pain that causes both Mary and Martha to meet Jesus on the edge of town and cry out in anguish, acknowledging that Lazarus wouldn’t have had to die if Jesus was there. But without taking anything personally, Jesus speaks into their pain, reminding Martha of the promise he made that Lazarus’ illness wouldn’t lead to death. He assures her that Lazarus would rise again. This tender moment between Jesus and his friends should help settle our hearts in our grief, as it reminds us that even though God sees the bigger picture of our circumstances, he is still willing to take the time to comfort us in our pain, despair, and doubt. God knows that we’re finite creatures with a limited view on life. He understands that we may struggle and wrestle with doubt, and sometimes even anger, when life seems to be draining of its goodness. He doesn’t take it personally as long as you continue to depend on him. Be at peace in your weakness by bringing it to God. He will continue to remind you of his promises, give you a shoulder to cry on, and even weep with you as he leads you to a place of hope and faith once more.

We read David’s words in *Psalm 119:51 “​​Remember your word to your servant, for you have given me hope. 50 My comfort in my suffering is this: Your promise preserves my life.”*

I want to emphasize the last part of David’s psalm: *Your promise preserves my life.* When we’re suffering, it’s important to remember exactly what God has promised us. For Mary and Martha, it was that their brother’s illness wouldn’t lead to death. However, when Jesus tells Martha that he brother would rise again, she responds in a self-comforting way, by reminding herself that Lazarus indeed would rise again in the resurrection in the last days. But this wasn’t the promise Jesus had given her to hold onto. He had promised that this illness wouldn’t be the end of Lazarus’ time on earth. It can be easy to comfort ourselves by trying to rationalize what God is doing. But sometimes, the work God is doing to fulfill his promises isn’t rational to our human minds. But we have to hold onto what God actually promises us, rather than trying to fit his plan into our own mental box. To do so might give us momentary reprieve from our afflictions, but it doesn't provide the sense of comfort that God wants us to feel by wholly trusting in the words he’s given to us.

Remember: If God has promised to do something, he will do it exactly as he said he would. We just need to believe. This is what Jesus asks of Martha when he meets with her on the hill. He needs to get her to a place of belief before she’s able to fully comprehend that Jesus has power over death, even in this life. Even though Martha is struggling to believe, Jesus is willing to meet her in her heartache. And he’s willing to do the same for us. The gospel tells us that Jesus is the resurrection and the life, and that we can find new life in him if we just believe in him as God and Savior. What an incredible promise this is to us! One that we can hold onto with full assurance and hope in the God of life.

But for some of us, we may still feel weary from the weight of this world, and you’re not alone. What happens next in our story holds some of the most emotional impact in the shortest verse in all of Scripture. After Jesus speaks with Mary and comforts her in her grief, he asks we’re Lazarus has been laid.

As they make their way to his tomb, we’re told in *Luke 11:32 “Jesus wept.”*

The God of the universe who holds all things in his hands was filled with sadness to the point of tears as he grappled with the darkest part of sin’s sting: Death. Jesus knows that creation was never meant to be this way. He’s not a removed God who looks at our brokenness with pity. He enters into our hurt and mourns with us. As much as we hate the effects of sin, God hates it even more. So much so that he was willing to do anything to fix it. And that’s exactly what we get to understand as we read through this story and the ones that follow.

When Jesus raises Lazarus from the dead, he’s not only bringing comfort to his friends. He’s foreshadowing the events that would soon transpire in Jerusalem. We see now with the whole counsel of God’s word this was just a minor glimpse at the work Jesus came to accomplish. On the day of Lazarus’ restoration, Jesus demonstrated his power even over death. But in just a few short days, he would defeat death for good on the cross.

Looking at the Bible as a whole, we see the vast story of God’s plan for salvation and restoration of his broken creation, and how there is nothing that he will not redeem.

As Paul said in *1 Thessalonians 4:13 “Brothers and sisters, we do not want you to be uninformed about those who sleep in death, so that you do not grieve like the rest of mankind, who have no hope. 14 For we believe that Jesus died and rose again, and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him. 15 According to the Lord’s word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. 16 For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. 18 Therefore encourage one another with these words.”*

This is the gospel message. That both those who are asleep in death and those who still live on this side of eternity will be brought before the Lord together where we will be with him forever. We mourn and grieve over the darkness that has overcome this world, but not as those without hope. From the moment sin entered into the world, God made a promise to save us. He knew from the very beginning that he would send his only son to redeem what had been lost. Jesus is the resurrection and the life, and we can have new life with him. During his ministry, he performed many spectacular miracles that inspired faith, stirred up hearts of worship, and brought people unimaginable transformation. But he performed the greatest miracle of all when he conquered sin, defeated death, and rose to new life. And all he calls us to do to experience these same miracles is believe in him as the Son, Savior, and Messiah.