

# Born to Win

## The Words of Jesus #30

by Ronald L. Dart

The chances are pretty good that you know someone who has had a *miraculous* answer to prayer—really, someone who’s been deathly sick and been healed. There are a lot of people walking around out there who ought to be dead, but people prayed for them and tumors have disappeared, hearts have healed up, and people who weren’t expected to go out of the hospital went out on their own. The problem, of course, is that a lot of times that healing can be explained away—the doctor missed the diagnosis or there was a “spontaneous remission” of the cancer. But there’s one miracle that’s hard to explain away: a man who was *surely dead* but who was brought back to life. No, I don’t know anyone like that—but Jesus? Jesus did.

### John 11

KJ2000

- <sup>1</sup> Now a certain man was sick, named Lazarus, of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha.
- <sup>2</sup> (It was that Mary who anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick.)
- <sup>3</sup> Therefore his sisters sent unto him, saying, Lord, behold, he whom you love is sick.
- <sup>4</sup> 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.

Jesus knew *precisely* what he was going to do from the start of this incident. And I rather wonder, in a way, if a part of what he was doing here was resolving this question that I raised at the beginning of this piece—that there are a lot of people walking around out there who ought to be dead, but you can explain it all away; you can find some other reason why these people survived. And there is no question that, as Jesus healed people all over the landscape in that particular time, there were people who were still explaining it all away. And so he was determined to do one miracle *no one* could explain away.

### John 11

KJ2000

- <sup>5</sup> Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus.

They were people of whom he was *particularly* fond.

### John 11

KJ2000

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

Now, you know, this really required some discipline to do this when he *knew* that Lazarus was going to die—and this was a man he loved *dearly*.

**John 11**

KJ2000

<sup>7</sup> Then after that said he to his disciples, Let us go into Judea again.

<sup>8</sup> His disciples said unto him, Teacher, the Jews have just sought to stone you; and go you there again?

<sup>9</sup> Jesus answered, Are there not twelve hours in the day? If any man walks in the day, he stumbles not, because he sees the light of this world.

<sup>10</sup> But if a man walks in the night, he stumbles, because there is no light in him.

It's the equivalent of Jesus telling his disciples, "Hey fellas, a man's got to do what he's got to do, and we've got to do it *while we can*." The reference to 12 hours in a day is an allusion to the limited time he had in which to do the things he had to do. You can't skulk around in the dark and get this job done.

**John 11**

KJ2000

<sup>11</sup> These things said he: and after that he said unto them, Our friend Lazarus sleeps; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep.

<sup>12</sup> Then said his disciples, Lord, if he sleeps, he shall do well.

<sup>13</sup> However Jesus spoke of his death: but they thought that he had spoken of taking of rest in sleep.

Now, they weren't total blockheads, these fellows that were with Jesus. If you had been there, you probably would have said the same thing. But then Jesus said plainly:

**John 11**

KJ2000

<sup>14</sup> [...] Lazarus is dead.

<sup>15</sup> And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, to the intent you may believe; [...]

That's what this is all about, folks. It's all about finally trying to get through their minds, to nail his own disciples down—to be sure that they really know and *know* that they know what he can do, and who he is, and how far his power really went.

**John 11**

KJ2000

<sup>15</sup> And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, to the intent you may believe; nevertheless let us go unto him.

<sup>16</sup> Then said Thomas, who is called Didymus, unto his fellow disciples, Let us also go, that we may die with him.

I'll bet that some of the disciples rolled their eyes to heavens at that one. Thomas was, I think, a bit melodramatic at this point.

**John 11**

KJ2000

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

Now, how long do you need to make your point? He had already raised the dead, but he always raised the dead *immediately* after they died. In other words, the person had died in just a matter of minutes or perhaps hours. Jesus was there, he took them by the hand, he raised them up, and they would say, "Oh, well, that was just resuscitation or the person wasn't really dead." How long do you need to wait before people will say, "Well, I guess he *really was* dead, and I guess he *really did* come back to life.?"

<sup>18</sup> Now Bethany was near unto Jerusalem, about fifteen furlongs off:

That's less than two miles, as the crow flies—probably about two miles on the road. It was southeast of Jerusalem.

## John 11

KJ2000

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

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

<sup>21</sup> Then said Martha unto Jesus, Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.

<sup>22</sup> But I know, that even now, whatsoever you will ask of God, God will give it to you.

Now, that's interesting, because at first she seems to say, "Oh, if you had only been here he would not have died. But, even now, I trust and I have confidence in you."

## John 11

KJ2000

<sup>23</sup> Jesus said unto her, Your brother shall rise again.

<sup>24</sup> Martha said unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day.

So, even though she had lost her brother and even though she was weeping over it, she had *confidence* in the resurrection and was comfortable there. So she looked ahead to the future, but that wasn't what Jesus was talking about.

## John 11

KJ2000

<sup>25</sup> Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believes in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live:

Now, there are a lot of us today in the world who believe that. We say, "Oh, yeah, I believe that Jesus is the resurrection and the life." We believe it by faith, after all these years, because we read in the Bible. But these people *didn't have* that to go by. She was hoping for and praying for and looking forward to the resurrection of her brother, someday, but the resurrection was *right there in front of her* in the person of Jesus. The problem was, Jesus had to *establish* that for his disciples and for all the rest of us.

## John 11

AKJV

<sup>25</sup> Jesus said to her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believes in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live:

<sup>26</sup> And whoever lives and believes in me shall never die. Believe you this?

<sup>27</sup> She said to him, Yes, Lord: I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world.

<sup>28</sup> And when she had so said, she went her way, and called Mary her sister secretly, saying, The Master is come, and calls for you.

<sup>29</sup> As soon as she heard that, she arose quickly, and came to him.

I love this story. It has so much detail that is true to life—of the movements of people back and forth, and the feelings that they had, the things that they said. It has a real sense of *reality* to it.

**John 11**

AKJV

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

<sup>31</sup> 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 goes to the grave to weep there. [*Let's go with her.*]

<sup>32</sup> Then when Mary was come where Jesus was, and saw him, she fell down at his feet, saying to him, Lord, if you had been here, my brother had not died.

Now, that had to hurt a little bit. Having that come back from a woman that he loved and cared for very deeply, about a man he loved and cared for very deeply, and then to almost be reproached by the statement that, “If you had just...if you just come earlier, he would not have died.” Jesus *knew* what he was going to do, but when he:

**John 11**

AKJV

<sup>33</sup> [...] saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, he groaned in the spirit, and was troubled.

<sup>34</sup> And said, Where have you laid him? They said to him, Lord, come and see.

<sup>35</sup> Jesus wept.

Now, I've heard a lot of ideas about this and, given the fact that Jesus knew what he was going to do, *why* was he weeping? How come this man, who had all this power, who *knew* that he was the resurrection, who *knew* that he was the life—he walks up to this grave and he starts to weep when he looks around and sees everyone weeping? I've heard some speculate that, “Well, he was weeping because of the unbelief and the hard hearts of all the people around him.” I might have thought the same...until my mother died.

My mother was well along in years and her health was failing fast. It was obvious from the doctor's report that her body was just *shutting down*. He said one organ was shutting down after another and all the vital organs were shutting down. She was dying of old age. I felt I was ready for her passing. They called me, I came to the hospital, and I sat at her bedside in intensive care—watching the heart monitor and wondering when I would stop, hold her hand from time to time, leaned over and speak in her ear from time to time (although I knew she could not hear). I hated myself a bit for how I was feeling; I thought I should *feel* more. But I told myself I just being realistic. I had accepted the fact it was time for her to go. I was comforted that she was unconscious, because her body was obviously in *terrible distress*. What I did *not* expect was my reaction when the monitor slowed and showed her heart skipping a beat and then...it stopped. I broke down and cried like I had not cried since I was a boy. I thought I was ready. I was as ready as you can get. But I'm human, I'm flesh and blood, and I responded as man was *made* to respond in the presence of the death of someone he loves. Being ready has *nothing whatever* to do with it.

You know, there is *nothing* in the ministry of Jesus that so demonstrates that he was flesh and blood. In the face of the death of someone he loved and the weeping of sisters whom he also loved, Jesus did what any flesh and blood man would do—he *wept*. He could not help himself, because he was human; he was flesh. And Jesus comes to reveal to us a God who is somewhat different from what man invents. We tend to want to think of God as sitting in Olympian splendor somewhere, high and lifted up, where he cannot feel the the pains of man, where he cannot sense the hurts of man, and where, if we do something that displeases him along the way, he can step on us and *crush* us like a cockroach. And we don't realize that God is touched by us and by our feelings and by our hurts. And here's Jesus, who was completely in the flesh, whose chest heaved, whose face distorted, and who wept. And all weeping is, in some measure, uncontrollable.

**John 11**

AKJV

<sup>36</sup> Then said the Jews, Behold how he loved him!

<sup>37</sup> 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?

<sup>38</sup> Jesus therefore again groaning in himself comes to the grave. It was a cave, and a stone lay on it.

<sup>39</sup> Jesus said, Take you away the stone. Martha, the sister of him that was dead, said to him, Lord, by this time he stinks: for he has been dead four days.

<sup>40</sup> Jesus said to her, Said I not to you, that, if you would believe, you should see the glory of God? [*Move the stone.*]

<sup>41</sup> Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid. And Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said, Father, I thank you that you have heard me.

<sup>42</sup> And I knew that you hear me always: but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that you have sent me.

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

<sup>44</sup> And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with grave clothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus said to them, Loose him, and let him go.

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

You know, I would think so. How on earth are you going to explain *this one* away?

So a man who was dead four days walks out of the tomb alive, and Jesus has established that he is, indeed, the resurrection. How did they respond? Well, some people believed on him as a result of it.

### John 11

AKJV

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

<sup>47</sup> Then gathered the chief priests and the Pharisees a council, and said, What do we? for this man does many miracles.

I should say so. I mean, there were all sorts of people wandering around the landscape alive who might otherwise have been dead, people who were whole who otherwise had been crippled and maimed, people who could see who were blind, people could hear who had been deaf. The witness to Jesus and his work was *all over the place*. And a man who *had* been dead for four days was alive. They said, “What are we going to do?”

### John 11

AKJV

<sup>48</sup> If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him: and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation.

What in the world were they thinking about? Words fail me. I don't know what to say to that. A man who was dead has been brought back to life. There's a man walking in their streets who has the *power over death* and they don't know what to do about him. They're just afraid that the Romans will come and take away both their place and their nation.

What they were assuming from all this is that Jesus was going to lead a revolution, and the Romans would come in and crush the revolution, and their nation would come to cease. And, what may to them have been more important, their *place* in their society and their scheme of things would have been threatened. But it's really, really hard to understand—men worrying about their place. You know, you don't get to be that hard-hearted and calloused and in that frame of mind overnight; it comes about over time. A man has got to practice a long time to be that hard and, perhaps, even that stupid.

But they were afraid of Jesus. And what's interesting is that we've been going through the words of Jesus systematically, and his words are encouraging, his words are uplifting. The only negative thing Jesus ever

has to say is about those people who attempt to turn God into some kind of Greek Olympian God, that looks down from on high and zaps you with a lightning bolt or crushes you when you step one inch out of the line—when you offend him or when you turn him off in some way. That God is defensive and sensitive and gets hurt and takes revenge upon us. That’s the way some people were looking at God, and Jesus was pretty hard on people who had that view of God. And he himself came to show us the Father: a man of tender compassion, a man who cared about people, a man who was moved with compassion and healed people, who was gracious and fed people who were hungry. This is a man that they wanted to kill.

### John 11

AKJV

<sup>49</sup> And one of them, named Caiaphas, being the high priest that same year, said to them, You know nothing at all,

<sup>50</sup> Nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not.

<sup>51</sup> And this spoke he not of himself: but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation;

<sup>52</sup> And not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad.

And if you think he means the 12 tribes of Israel scattered abroad, you haven’t been paying attention. He’s talking about bringing *all mankind* together under God.

### John 11

AKJV

<sup>53</sup> Then from that day forth they took counsel together for to put him to death.

That’s hard to figure. But I suppose, when you’re threatened enough by something and you’ve hardened yourself enough, you can be ready to kill the son of God.

### John 11

AKJV

<sup>54</sup> Jesus therefore walked no more openly among the Jews; but went there to a country near to the wilderness, into a city called Ephraim, and there continued with his disciples.

You really have to think about this. They are determined to kill Jesus Christ—a man who has healed the sick and raised the dead, and a man whose teachings, now, have endured for 2,000 years and have affected the lives of millions of people. And so while these men made up their mind to kill him and went about making plans to kill him, Jesus continued to walk the land and to teach.

### Luke 13

AKJV

<sup>10</sup> And he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the sabbath.

<sup>11</sup> And, behold, there was a woman which had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bowed together, and could in no wise lift up herself.

<sup>12</sup> And when Jesus saw her, he called her to him, and said to her, Woman, you are loosed from your infirmity.

<sup>13</sup> And he laid his hands on her: and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God.

I would certainly think so. But the ruler of the synagogue was *indignant*. He was indignant that this woman was made whole because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath day.

**Luke 13**

AKJV

<sup>14</sup> And the ruler of the synagogue answered with indignation, because that Jesus had healed on the sabbath day, and said to the people, There are six days in which men ought to work: in them therefore come and be healed, and not on the sabbath day.

<sup>15</sup> The Lord then answered him, and said, You hypocrite, does not each one of you on the sabbath loose his ox or his ass from the stall, and lead him away to watering?

<sup>16</sup> And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has bound, see, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the sabbath day?

You know, it's a peculiar defect of the legalistic mind that it can't see the discrepancies like this. "Rules are made to be followed. This is a rule; you've got to follow the rule." I want to tell you something very important to know when you're reading the Bible.

There is a peculiar habit people have. When they pick up their Bible to read it, they lay aside their common sense. What I wanted to tell you that so important to know about reading the Bible is that it's perfectly okay to *use common sense* when applying the Bible to your life. Now, the reason I say this is manifold, but not least is the fact that common sense is a *gift of God*. Our minds were *designed* that way. The legalist *could* use common sense—he did to the extent of untying and letting an animal loose; that's sensible—but he couldn't see the same principle for a woman who was bound in this infirmity. And one really wonders: What kind of common sense works that way? What makes the one different from the other?

Well, one thing is whether it's in your power to *do* the thing. Think about it. It is in your power to water a jackass. It's not in your power to heal a sick woman. And so your common sense comes through and says, "Look at that poor animal. I feel sorry for that poor animal. I'll take that animal down and give him a drink." But this poor woman here, who is bound over by this infirmity, you can't heal her. There's not a thing in the world you can do about it. And in her case you think, "Well, you might as well abide by the rules. There's no point in healing this woman on the Sabbath day."

And there's another principle: *You* have no loss if you don't heal that woman. If you take your ox or your ass and you don't water them, they could lose weight, their health could be broken, they may not be strong enough to do your work tomorrow. It's your loss if your animal gets sick. "Ah, but this poor woman—what difference does that make?" So what would you conclude, then? If *you* can't do it, then no one else can do it either. That seems to be the way they made their rules, and the way their version of what they called common sense worked.

**Luke 13**

AKJV

<sup>17</sup> And when he had said these things [*about leading this ass away and watering him*], all his adversaries were ashamed: and all the people rejoiced for all the glorious things that were done by him.

And Jesus continued to teach. He said:

**Luke 13**

AKJV

<sup>18</sup> [...] To what is the kingdom of God like? and whereunto shall I resemble it?

<sup>19</sup> It is like a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and cast into his garden; and it grew, and waxed a great tree; and the fowls of the air lodged in the branches of it.

And yet a mustard seed is the smallest, tiniest of all seeds. What is he saying here? He is saying that the Kingdom of God, in his person and his work, had come, and it was very small—but it was going to become a *big* thing.

**Luke 13**

AKJV

<sup>20</sup> And again he said, Whereunto shall I liken the kingdom of God?

<sup>21</sup> It is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened.

<sup>22</sup> And he went through the cities and villages, teaching, and journeying toward Jerusalem.

And his message here is, “This thing starts small, folks, but it’s going to become much bigger.” He was right, wasn’t he?

**Luke 13**

AKJV

<sup>23</sup> Then said one to him, Lord, are there few that be saved? And he said to them,

<sup>24</sup> Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say to you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.

That’s interesting. He is saying here that a lot of people who *really want* to enter the Kingdom of God and who *really want* to enter into life, and are going to try, aren’t going to be able to do it.

**Luke 13**

AKJV

<sup>25</sup> When once the master of the house is risen up, and has shut to the door, and you begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us; and he shall answer and say to you, I know you not from where you are:

<sup>26</sup> Then shall you begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in your presence, and you have taught in our streets.

“We’ve known you. We’ve been religious people. We’ve actually attended holy day with you.”

**Luke 13**

AKJV

<sup>27</sup> But he shall say, I tell you, I know you not from where you are; depart from me, all you workers of iniquity.

There’s something you ought to know about that word, “iniquity” [ἀνομία, Strong’s G458]. In the Greek, it’s the negative of the word “law”. “Get away from me, all you workers of lawlessness.”

It’s a hard truth to swallow, but I’m afraid they’re going to an awful lot of people—who are religious people, who’ve tried to approach God, who’ve heard the teachings of God—who, in the end, are going to be losers.

Until next time, this is Ronald Dart, and you weren’t born to lose; you were *born to win*.

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