

People and Events Lead Us to the Lord

Intro. Many of us can point to one or more events that were pivotal to our lives. It might be a physical move from one place to another due to a job change. Maybe it was an opportunity too good to pass up. It could be meeting someone who completely changed our previous plans. *These* events triggered a series of others that led us in a direction we never imagined. Some were good while others were not. The raising of Lazarus was both in the ministry of the Lord.

I. A day that started out in grief and tears over the death of Lazarus, ended in a joyous celebration of life with good friends. It was a second- to-last supper and maybe the final time the Lord enjoyed the hospitality and friendship of Mary, Martha and Lazarus in their home. During the laughter and

gaiety of that night, he might have been thinking ahead to entering Jerusalem, *also for the last time*. In the past weeks, three disciples heard God's voice telling them to listen to the Lord; a woman found water that would satisfy her thirst always; and a blind man found the light for his life. Today we stand near the tomb of a man who found resurrection through Christ. When we are told of a friend or family member's serious illness, if possible, we rush to their side for support. The Lord didn't rush to his friends'. He calmly responded by staying where he was two more days. The Lord had a bigger purpose. Martha and Mary did not know that, so they were hurt and Martha even angry at his absence. We hear their rather sharp rebuke, "If you had been here...." Their grief was speaking. Only very good friends can talk to each other like that without destroying the

relationship. The Lord did not take offense; rather he led them towards faith in him. The sisters *knew* the Lord was from God, but their faith was still weak, *not believing him to be the Messiah*. In a similar way with the woman at the well and the former blind man, during his conversation with Mary and Martha they came to a full, strong faith in him. The glory of God was shown previously on the mountain. In the resurrection of Lazarus, it is again shown but to *all the disciples* **and** the crowd – some from Jerusalem. When the Jewish leaders heard about the raising of Lazarus, the decision was made. This was too much. His popularity would be out of control. The Lord had to die. Plans were set in motion. The result was the triumphant entrance into Jerusalem we celebrate next Sunday. And the events that quickly followed: his arrest, interrogation,

crucifixion and death. This miracle also triggered the events leading to the Lord's resurrection.

Concl. The same words spoken about the man born blind were said of Lazarus: “it is for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified through it.” It was not something *done* to the blind man or Lazarus to make them suffer. *Something* caused the blindness and the illness. The Lord took those moments to show the works of God. The event that triggered change for the disciples on the mountain; the woman at the well; the man born blind; and Martha, Mary and Lazarus, was knowing and believing in the Lord as the Son of God. **What are the events in our lives that lead us to believe?** **Who are the people who lead us to believe?**

Fr. Michael Pendergraft, March 26, 2023