

Let's examine the passage carefully:

John 11:14-16 (NIV):

*"Then Jesus told them plainly, 'Lazarus is dead,
and for your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may
believe. But let us go to him.'
Then Thomas (also known as Didymus) said to the other disciples,
'Let us also go, that we may die with him.'"*

At first glance, it may seem that Thomas wanted to die alongside Lazarus. However, this is a misunderstanding of the text.

Thomas did not intend to die with Lazarus himself. Rather, he was expressing a willingness to go with Jesus, even if it meant facing death with Him.

Context and Theological Significance

To fully grasp Thomas's statement, let's consider the wider context of John 11:5-16 (NIV):

Jesus loved Martha, Mary, and Lazarus (John 11:5), demonstrating the deep personal relationships He had with them. When Lazarus fell seriously ill, Jesus delayed going to him for two days (John 11:6), which serves a greater divine purpose: to glorify God through the upcoming miracle of raising Lazarus from the dead (John 11:4).

When Jesus announces He is returning to Judea (John 11:7), His disciples express fear because the Jews there recently tried to stone Jesus (John 11:8). Jesus' reply about walking in the light or darkness (John 11:9-10) is rich in theological meaning: He is the Light of the world (John 8:12), and His followers, walking in the light, will not stumble.

Jesus refers to Lazarus as "sleeping" (John 11:11-13), using sleep as a metaphor for death, signaling that death is temporary and that He has power over it a key Christological theme pointing to Jesus as the Resurrection and the Life (John 11:25).

When Jesus plainly says Lazarus is dead (John 11:14), He expresses confidence that this event will serve to strengthen the disciples' faith (John 11:15). Despite the danger, Jesus insists on going to Judea.

Thomas's Response and Its Meaning

Thomas's remark, "Let us also go, that we may die with him," reflects his loyalty and readiness to face danger with Jesus (John 11:16).

Theologically, this reveals several important points:

1. **Faith and Courage:** Thomas shows a willingness to stand with Jesus even unto death, a hallmark of genuine discipleship (Luke 9:23). This anticipates the costly discipleship Jesus later teaches.
2. **Misunderstanding of Jesus's Mission:** Thomas, like the other disciples, does not fully grasp the nature of Jesus's mission that His death and resurrection would defeat death itself. Thomas sees the risk as physical death, not the victorious glory to come.
3. **Foreshadowing of Christ's Passion:** Thomas's willingness prefigures the future trials the disciples will face after Jesus's arrest and crucifixion (John 13:36, Acts 7:54-60).

A Lesson on Dependence on God's Strength

Thomas's readiness contrasts with Peter's later failure (Luke 22:31-34), illustrating human weakness despite good intentions. The New Testament consistently teaches that our strength to serve and endure

comes not from ourselves but from God's grace (2 Corinthians 12:9-10).

This passage challenges believers to humility and dependence on God rather than self-confidence. True faith means recognizing our limitations and trusting God for strength, especially in the face of suffering and death.

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