



Southwest Indian Ministries Camps

Teen Devotional

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October 2022 – The Comeback

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First and Last Name: _____

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What's the most unbelievable thing you've read in the Bible?

When we talk about comebacks, we usually think of teams that came from behind to win late in the game or celebrities whose careers stalled before they accepted a career-reviving role. On occasion, we'll celebrate people who overcame the odds in their personal lives to achieve great success. For example, Chris Gardner overcame homelessness to achieve success in business (his story is the basis for the movie *The Pursuit of Happyness*). Victor Frankl wrote *Man's Search for Meaning* after losing his family and surviving Nazi concentration camps. Simone Biles overcame a collection of family challenges to become a gold-medal-winning Olympic gymnast.

All those stories are impressive, and they all have one thing in common: those people did something to overcome the obstacles they faced. They worked hard for their success; they deserve all the credit!

When it comes to our comeback, though, Jesus should get all the credit. He's the one who rose from the dead, and now we no longer need to fear death! When the tomb rolled away, Jesus literally conquered death's power; if the grave can't contain Jesus, it won't contain his people. The same power that raised Jesus from the dead is now at work in believers' lives, making us more like him and giving us eternal life with God.

In the passage you're about to read, Jesus reveals this truth to his followers by stepping into a seemingly hopeless situation. Here's the back-story: Jesus' friend Lazarus was sick, and it didn't look good, so his sisters sent word to Jesus, begging him to come and help. Jesus delayed, and Lazarus died. That's where the story picks up.

Jesus Comforts the Sisters of Lazarus

¹⁷ On his arrival, Jesus found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days. ¹⁸ Now Bethany was less than two miles^[a] from Jerusalem, ¹⁹ and many Jews had come to Martha and Mary to comfort them in the loss of their brother. ²⁰ When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went out to meet him, but Mary stayed at home.

²¹ “Lord,” Martha said to Jesus, “if you had been here, my brother would not have died. ²² But I know that even now God will give you whatever you ask.”

²³ Jesus said to her, “Your brother will rise again.”

²⁴ Martha answered, “I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day.”

²⁵ Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; ²⁶ and whoever lives by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this?”

²⁷ “Yes, Lord,” she replied, “I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, who is to come into the world.”

²⁸ After she had said this, she went back and called her sister Mary aside. “The Teacher is here,” she said, “and is asking for you.” ²⁹ When Mary heard this, she got up quickly and went to him. ³⁰ Now Jesus had not yet entered the village, but was still at the place where Martha had met him. ³¹ When the Jews who had been with Mary in the house, comforting her, noticed how quickly she got up and went out, they followed her, supposing she was going to the tomb to mourn there.

³² When Mary reached the place where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet and said, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.”

³³ When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come along with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in spirit and troubled. ³⁴ “Where have you laid him?” he asked.

“Come and see, Lord,” they replied.

³⁵ Jesus wept.

³⁶ Then the Jews said, “See how he loved him!”

³⁷ But some of them said, “Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?”

Jesus Raises Lazarus From the Dead

³⁸ Jesus, once more deeply moved, came to the tomb. It was a cave with a stone laid across the entrance. ³⁹ “Take away the stone,” he said.

“But, Lord,” said Martha, the sister of the dead man, “by this time there is a bad odor, for he has been there four days.”

⁴⁰ Then Jesus said, “Did I not tell you that if you believe, you will see the glory of God?”

⁴¹ So they took away the stone. Then Jesus looked up and said, “Father, I thank you that you have heard me. ⁴² I knew that you always hear me, but I said this for the benefit of the people standing here, that they may believe that you sent me.”

⁴³ When he had said this, Jesus called in a loud voice, “Lazarus, come out!” ⁴⁴ The dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth around his face. Jesus said to them, “Take off the grave clothes and let him go.”

Butterflies may appear to be dainty displays of grace and beauty, but they didn't start out that way. They begin as tiny eggs before breaking into their lives as larvae or what we would call a caterpillar. Essentially, caterpillars are worms with legs and a purpose. That purpose is to eat...a lot.



When their time as a caterpillar is ending, they begin to mummify themselves in what is called a chrysalis. Inside the chrysalis, a metamorphosis is happening. The legged worm that only knew how to crawl on its belly and eat becomes a beautiful, winged creature capable of flight and reproduction.

One problem: the winged creature is still inside the chrysalis. The butterfly must emerge from a tiny opening in the chrysalis, and it's a struggle. But the struggle is necessary for a healthy butterfly to exist. The tiny hole provides just the right amount of resistance and pressure to essentially squeeze moisture away from the new wings of the butterfly. The process is so precise that if a well-meaning passerby tries to help by expanding the hole, the wings will not develop properly. Once the exit is complete, the butterfly flaps its wings a few times to get the blood flowing and begins its new life.

It's a resurrection of sorts; the old is gone and the new is here. Where once a worm's life of self-indulgence and an ill-equipped body existed, a new picture of delicate beauty and glory appears.

Questions:

- What similarities do you see between caterpillars (being limited and self-indulgent) and people?
- How can people have a chrysalis-like time of transformation?
- What instigates a person's change from self-indulgence to new life?
- Since God's family has been given a new life, how should our daily lives look different?
- What's the coolest comeback story you've ever heard?

THE BIBLE IN YOUR LIFE

To Jesus, death isn't final. He raised Lazarus from the dead and then a little while later, Jesus himself rose from the dead! Since Jesus defeated sin and death through his Resurrection, we can live lives transformed by Jesus' power. We can have new life spiritually, just like Lazarus had new life physically.

Read John 11:17–44, then answer the following questions.

Questions:

- How does Jesus describe himself to Martha?

- What is Jesus' response to the grief he saw in his friends?
- How do you think Lazarus' life might have changed after he was resurrected?
- How might your life change after believing in Jesus and having new life?
- What do you need to leave behind now that you have new life with Jesus?
 - What steps can you take to do that this week?

A QUOTE TO THINK ABOUT

"No matter how devastating our struggles, disappointments, and troubles are, they are only temporary...the Resurrection promises you a future of immeasurable good." – Josh McDowell

THE TAKEAWAY

Because of Jesus' Resurrection, we can have a new and transformed life.

