***IF YOU HAD BEEN HERE….* *MM O/L***

**At our Tuesday night Bible studies, we’ve been encouraged recently to become Bible detectives – that is, to read the scriptures forensically. So, deerstalkers on and magnifying glasses out – we’ve got a case to solve!**

**A report has come in from one of our detectives in the Galilee division – John McZeb (Mk. 10:35). He’s actually written a whole book of cases – it’s called John’s Gospel.**

* **In ch. 2, there’s the Case of the Missing Wine (vv. 1-11), although they found it in plain sight in the end;**
* **In ch. 8 there was that attempted murder of a woman by stoning (vv. 2-11);**
* **In ch. 12, there was the donkey that disappeared and turned up in Jerusalem (v. 14ff);**
* **In ch. 10 he writes about some shepherds who were *thieves and robbers (v. 8)*;**
* **And in ch. 20, his most famous case – the Mystery of the Empty Tomb: people are still arguing about that one!**

**But, today we’re going to look at ch. 11. It’s an interesting case – medical negligence.**

**Jn. 11:1-37**

**Ok, so, at Bible detective school, we learnt to ask six questions: *who, what, when, where, why* and *how?***

**So, *WHERE?* Where’s the crime scene? Well, John tells us: Bethany (v. 1), a village near Jerusalem, and we’ll also have to visit the local graveyard (v. 38). But the alleged crime was actually committed far away *across the Jordan (10:40).***

***WHO?* Who’s the victim? This guy from Bethany called Lazarus. We obviously can’t interview him – he’s dead. We’ll need to get a pathologist and an exhumation order from Jerusalem because he’s already buried. That is, unless they can sort out someone locally to dig him up!**

***WHEN?* He died four days ago and they must have buried him straight away (v. 17).**

***WHAT?* What’s the allegation? Manslaughter by neglect – specifically, medical negligence. The complainants are Lazarus’s two sisters, Mary and Martha. And they’re accusing one Jesus of Nazareth.**

***HOW?* What do they say He did or didn’t do? They’re saying that Lazarus fell sick and they sent a message to Jesus, who was across the Jordan, saying, *the one you love is sick (v. 3).* Because He loved him, they expected this Jesus to race across the Jordan to Lazarus’s sickbed. John writes in his report, *Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. Yet when he heard that Lazarus was sick, he stayed where he was two more days (vv. 5-6).* So both Martha and Mary accused Him separately, *if you had been here, my brother would not have died (vv. 21, 32).* They allege that, if He hadn’t waited those extra days, He could have saved his life. And it looks like an open and shut case:at first Jesus said to His disciples, *This sickness will not end in death (v. 4)* and, *Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I am going there to wake him up (v. 11),* so it looks like a misdiagnosis, but then He convicted Himself when He told them that He knew that *Lazarus is dead (v. 14)* and He made it worse by saying, *I am glad (v. 15).***

**So we’d better haul Him in for questioning – except we don’t need to, He’s right here! Let’s listen to His defence – *WHY* He says He did it (or, rather, didn’t do what they thought He should have done):**

* **He said inv. 4, *[This sickness] is for God’s glory so that God’s Son may be glorified through it*;**
* ***[He] said to [Martha], “Your brother will rise again”* in v. 23*;***
* **And then He started to cry (v. 35);**
* **Then He told them to roll away the stone over the tomb and, when they quite reasonably pointed out that a dead man had been in there for four days in a warm climate – *by this time there is a bad odour (v. 39) -* He insisted and said, *If you believe, you [will] see the glory of God (v. 40).***

***Believe?* Detectives have to deal with facts, not faith….unless faith is, itself, a fact. When Martha accused Him, Jesus had said, *“I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?”***

***“Yes, Lord,” she told him, “I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who was to come into the world (vv. 25-7)”.***

**So we have three hypotheses:**

1. **He’s a lunatic who *thinks* He’s the Son of God;**
2. **He’s a fraud who’s *pretending* to be the Son of God; or**
3. **He’s telling the truth and He (gulp!) *is* the Son of God.**

**Well, every hypothesis needs to be tested. How can we test this one? We don’t need to: He’s tested it Himself:**

**vv. 38-44**

**Case dismissed! Jesus was not negligent and He’s never negligent. He is aware of every circumstance of every case – even when a single sparrow falls (Mt. 10:29) - and, if we must suffer so that God may be glorified, then He weeps with us through the experience. That’s part of God’s glory. But, if we are willing to take Him at His word and *believe,* He will always prove Himself.**

**Remember, neither COVID-19 nor any of the sicknesses pandemic in this world since Eden are a surprise to Him. But He responds in His own time and His own way. Not even the tomb is dark to Him and He breathes life where we can only smell decay.**

**He is the resurrection and the life. As He said to Martha, *Do you believe this….?***