

Correcting Jesus

“After saying these things, He said to them, 'Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I go to awaken him.' The disciples said to Him, 'Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will recover.' ... Then Jesus told them plainly, 'Lazarus has died, and for your sake I am glad that I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him.'” John 11:11-12, 14.

We are not nearly as far removed from Jesus's disciples as we like to think. We read about the disciples scattering after Jesus's arrest, and many of us (like Peter) think that we would have done differently – that we would have gone to the death with Jesus. Or we read about the disciples asking very unintelligent questions that clearly demonstrate they did not understand Jesus. In Mark 8, for example, after Jesus fed five thousand with only five loaves and two fishes, He and His disciples were confronted with another crowd of four thousand, and the disciples did not know how to feed the crowd, though they had seven loaves. Finally, in verse 21, Jesus asked them, *“Do you not yet understand?”*

We at times do not understand Jesus's teachings or methods. But there is yet another way in which the disciples behaved that is very similar to the way we may behave: They corrected Jesus. In John 11, after Jesus told the disciples that they would go to Judea, the disciples reminded Jesus that the Jews wanted to kill Him – as if He did not know already. They corrected Him. Later in the same chapter, Jesus told the disciples that they were to go to awaken Lazarus, a man who was very sick, but the disciples protested: *“Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will recover.”* Once again, they corrected Jesus. We see this happen throughout the gospels. His disciples, who were to learn from Him to become like Him, instead try to teach Jesus.

How often do we correct Jesus? *He didn't really mean that*, we may tell others, or even ourselves, when teaching or learning about Jesus. On the surface it appears as if we are making Jesus more acceptable. On the surface it may even appear that we are embarrassed by Him. But the truth is that if we correct Jesus, it is not out of fear or embarrassment. It is out of unbelief. That is why Jesus said in John 11:14: *“ ... for your sake I am glad that I was not there, so that you may believe.”* The disciples corrected Jesus out of unbelief and we can do the same today. Jesus is not in need of our correction. We are in need of His.

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