

JESUS – THE RESURRECTION & THE LIFE

Scripture Text: Jn. 11:25-26

Introduction...

- **The Gospel of John was written to furnish proof that Jesus is the Son of God (Jn. 20:30-31).**
- **When we have come to Jn. 11, Jesus would have performed 6 miracles.**
- **The raising of Lazarus from the dead is the most astounding of all the miracles Jesus had performed.**
- **If all His other miracles were stricken from the Gospel record, we would have enough in our possession to conclude that Jesus indeed is the Son of God (Jn 1:1).**

Lazarus was ill...

- In our text this morning, we read of Lazarus, a dear friend of Jesus, was critically ill.
- “Lazarus” is a significant name from the Hebrew Eleazer, which means "one whom God helps."
- But the emphasis here is not about Lazarus.
- Mary and Martha sent an urgent message to the Saviour, expecting that He would immediately come to them and heal Lazarus.
- “Lord, behold, he whom You love is sick” (v. 3).

Lazarus illness...

- 1. Like Lazarus, Christians are not exempt from illnesses and the troubles that beset us in this life.**
- 2. But like Paul the Lord will give us strength to overcome them.**
 - “My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in your weakness...” (II Cor 12:9).**

It is in the valley of life that we grow...

- **Sometimes life seems hard to bear. Full of sorrow, trouble and woe.**
- **It's then I have to remember. That it's in the valleys I grow.**
- **If I always stayed on the mountain top. And never experienced pain,**
- **I would never appreciate God's love. And would be living in vain.**
- **I have so much to learn. And my growth is very slow,**
- **Sometimes I need the mountain tops, But it's in the valleys I grow.**

It is in the valley of life that we grow...

- **I do not always understand; Why things happen as they do,**
- **But I am very sure of one thing. My Lord will see me through.**
- **Forgive me Lord, for complaining. When I'm feeling so very low.**
- **Just give me a gentle reminder. That it's in the valleys I grow.**
- **Thank you for valleys, Lord. For this one thing I know.**
- **The mountain tops are glorious. But it's in the valleys I grow!**

Turning to the Lord in time of troubles...

- **Who do we turn to for help when we are faced with difficulties in life?**
- **Like Mary and Martha, we need to learn from the psalmist:**
- **“I look unto the hills; from whence comes my help? My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth” (Ps 121:1-2).**
- **“God is our refuge and strength, A very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, Even though the earth be removed....” (Ps 46:1-3).**
- **“O God, You are my God; early will I seek You...” (Ps. 63:1).**
- **“I love those who love Me, and those who seek Me diligently will find Me” (Pro 8:17).**

The delay by Jesus...

- **As I read John 11, I am struck by the fact that when Jesus heard that Lazarus was sick, he deliberately delayed his return to Bethany (v6).**
 - **Jesus could have prevented the death of Lazarus, but did not. Why?**
- 1. That the Father and Son may be glorified through it (v4).**
- **The raising of Lazarus was proof of the divine power of the Lord Jesus over death.**
 - **That He is "the Resurrection and the Life," the One who would give life to him who would believe in Him.**

Why Jesus delay...

2. Increase faith in Jesus - that neither distance, space nor time could render ineffective the power of our Lord.
 - **Jer 23:23** – “Am I a God near at hand, and not a God afar off? Can anyone hide himself in secret places, so I shall not see him? Do I not fill heaven and earth?”
 - **Martha & Mary** – “Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died” (v21 & 32).
 - **When Jesus was met by Martha & Mary, they both professed their faith in His ability to heal Lazarus, had He arrived in time.**

Why Jesus delay...

- Like Mary & Martha, we want to see Jesus, we want His physical presence in order to believe.
- **Thomas** – “Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe.” (Jn. 20:25)
- **Jn 20:29** – “Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believed.”

Why Jesus delay...

- Both Mary & Martha's faith were apparently not as great at this point.
- "Did I not say to you, if you believe, you will see the glory of God?" (v. 40).
- How we too need to believe that we may see the glory of God!
- Mary & Martha's faith in Christ as Messiah and Saviour of necessity must include faith in His power over death and the grave.
- To believe in Jesus as Saviour is to trust in Him as the Resurrection and the Life.

Why Jesus delay...

- **Mary and Martha both believed that Jesus could have healed their brother so long as he was alive, but neither entertained hopes of his being brought forth from the tomb.**
- **What Jesus was teaching Martha & Mary is that whether He is physically near or afar off, Lazarus shall live though he had died.**
- **When Jesus raised Lazarus from the tomb, the power of God was seen on that day to be not only greater than sickness, but even greater than death itself.**
- **Let me point out that the critical time for Mary and Martha to exercise faith in the love and power of our Lord was while the body of Lazarus was still in the grave.**

Why Jesus delay...

- 3. Blaming God - “Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died” (v21 & 32).**
- **When Jesus arrived in Bethany, Lazarus had been dead for four days and his sisters were upset.**
 - **They had watched Jesus healed many who were sick, and yet their own brother had to die.**
 - **Like Martha we tend to fly in the face of our Lord the pain of our heart.**
 - **It is only later that we come to the realization that He is always there with us.**
 - **When the winds of life blow hard and cold He is always there in the shadows.**

Why Jesus delay...

- **The highest blessing that any of us can obtain, is that our wills should be bent until they coincide with God's will, and that takes time.**
- **Therefore, He often delay in His coming to our aid, yet His timing is always perfect.**
- **His delay causes us to learn patience, humility, trust and quiet submission to His perfect will.**

Why Jesus delay...

- Just as in the life of Martha, Mary and Lazarus, God's providential delay always accomplishes His divine purposes.
- His delayed help always comes at the right time. God's clock is different from ours, but it is always right on time.
- God's answer always comes at the right time and is punctual, though we most often think it is delayed.
- It comes at God's perfect timing and is always **“so that you may believe” (v. 15).**

Lord if you had been here...

- **“If you had been here.”** We all think of that all the time when we get into troubles.
- **If Jesus had been here, my marriage would have been saved.**
- **Lord, if you had been here, I wouldn't have given in to temptation and sin.**
- **If Jesus had been here when we needed him, our family would have been saved.**
- **But now Jesus is here. What will He do? Lazarus has been dead so long that any thought of an immediate resurrection is out of the question.**
- **But that doesn't seem to be on Martha's mind.**

Lord if you had been here...

- She believed that Lazarus would be raised on the last day.
- It apparently never occurred to her that Jesus could raise Lazarus right then and there.
- It is against this backdrop that Jesus said to Martha those famous words that have been quoted at a million gravesides and funeral services ever since:
- **“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?” (Jn 11:25-26).**

Jesus and death...

- Our Lord often used the word “sleep” to describe death figuratively.
- When he saw Jairus’ daughter, he said, “She’s asleep.”
- When he told the disciples that Lazarus was asleep, they said good because then they knew he would eventually wake up.
- **Paul says that “we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed...” (I Cor 15:51).**
- When Jesus raised Lazarus, it was just a specimen, a sample of what he will do for his people when he returns.

Conclusion...

- **We all wonder about death from time to time, don't we?**
- **To Christian, death is truly the last enemy (I Cor 15:26).**
- **We can beat other enemies, but death always wins in the end.**
- **We can put it off, dress it up, delay it, or deny it, but to no avail.**
- **“It is appointed unto man once to die,” says the Bible, and no one will escape that appointment.**
- **But in the presence of Jesus death is no longer death. It is something else entirely - as Paul says it has now lost its sting, and victory.**
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Conclusion...

- How can that be? The answer is Jesus himself - **“I am the resurrection and the life.”**
- No one can ever hope to escape death unless he is related to Jesus through personal faith.
- Do not be guilty of letting death sneak up on you and catch you unprepared.
- There is a great need for being ready, and there is no excuse for not being ready - Pro. 27:1; James 4:14.)