

June 9, 2019
John 11:1-53
"Bring Us Back to Life"

In our journey through the Gospel of John, we've seen some amazing miracles. Healing the man born blind. Changing water into wine. In John 11, Jesus does his most spectacular miracle. And it comes at a pivotal time in his ministry. Jesus raises his friend Lazarus from the dead.

Like all his miracles, Jesus raises Lazarus to show us who he is. As we move toward the final days of his earthly life, Jesus is going to remind us that he's the resurrection and the life. Jesus shows us who he is and what he can do in our lives.

Let's get right into chapter 11:

Now a certain man was ill, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. It was Mary who anointed the Lord with ointment and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was ill. So the sisters sent to him, saying, "Lord, he whom you love is ill." But when Jesus heard it he said, "This illness does not lead to death. It is for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it."

Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. So, when he heard that Lazarus was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was.

- Verses 1-6

Here we're already getting a glimpse into ways Jesus works. Always amazing but often unexpected, too.

What do you notice about how Jesus times things? Jesus waits. Lazarus is sick. And Jesus delays coming to him. Verses 1-3 clearly tell us who the people are. Lazarus and his two sisters, Mary and Martha, are from Bethany. Bethany is a town about one-and-a-half miles from Jerusalem. Remember, Jesus is pushing on to Jerusalem, where the last week of his life will take place. Mary, Martha, and Lazarus are good friends of Jesus. In his travels, Jesus would go to their home as a place of rest. A place of quiet retreat. They are close friends. We can hardly imagine what that would have been like.

We know that these three friends of Jesus have a serious problem. Lazarus is deathly ill. You know what it's like when someone you love is desperately ill.

How does Jesus react? Jesus says he can see how God is working here. God is working for His glory. So Jesus says Lazarus is sick but it's going to end in God's glory.

So Lazarus dies. But the end of the story isn't death. The end of the story is life. The end of the story is God's glory.

That's an interesting thing...God's glory. We end the Lord's Prayer with *for Thine is the Kingdom, the Power, and the Glory forever*. God's glory. When we give God the glory, that means we are honoring God. "Glory" means the brightness, splendor, magnificence, and majesty of God. That's glory. But as we move through John 11, and follow Jesus' journey to the cross, we're going to see specifically how we are going to see God's brightness, splendor, magnificence, and majesty. We're going to see God's glory when Jesus goes to the cross. When Jesus talks about the Son being glorified, he's talking directly about going to the cross. So in talking about glory here, Jesus is saying, *there's something deeper going on here than a healing*. The reaction of some to this healing will continue to move Jesus toward the cross, which is his glory.

Here's how verse 45-48 capture it:

Many of the Jews therefore, who had come with Mary and had seen what he did, believed in him, but some of them went to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done. So the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered the council and said, "What are we to do? For this man performs many signs. If we let him go on like this, everyone will believe in him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation."

So there it is. Jesus learns that Lazarus is ill. Jesus loves Lazarus. But he waits. Jesus waits because it's the right thing to do for the big picture. Jesus understands God's timing better than anyone.

As we talk about God's timing, that's something that might resonate with you right now. Perhaps you are waiting for God to work in your life. If you are waiting for God to work in your life, here are two things you ought to be doing.

First, make sure it is God you are waiting for. Sometimes people say it's God they're waiting for, but really, they're just waiting on themselves. Or they're waiting for nothing to happen, because they don't believe God is going to do something in their lives or they're afraid of what God might do in their lives. Like

they might have to sacrifice something or let go of something or humble themselves.

Are you truly waiting for something that fits into the will of God? Or are you waiting for some selfish need? Is it selfish or unselfish? Make sure it's God you're waiting for, and not some idea you've put into your head.

If it's God you're waiting for, more often than not, the path will involve humility or peace or patience or sacrifice or generosity or joy or kindness or forgiveness or goodness or gentleness or self-control. I can guarantee you that no one waits for God to help them smite their enemies. If you're honest with yourself, and if you pray on it, you will be able to see the dividing line between your will and God's will.

Second, if you are waiting for God to work in your life, you trust His timing.

Why do you trust God's timing? Because He knows more about it than you ever will. Can I hear an "Amen?"

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