

The Present God

John 11:1-11

Life Group Discussion – November 11th, 2018

Today's passage is one that most of us are familiar with and know very well. It is about the death of Lazarus, to the point where the body was beginning to decay and smell. It was an impossible task, but through Jesus the impossible became possible.

Mary was someone who made many mistakes in her past. She was someone with many regrets, but what we know is that she loved the Lord and she loved His words more than anything else. The way we receive God's love is for us to love His word first.

Even when Faithful, Hardship will Come

For many of us, we think that if we stay faithful that God will keep difficult situations away from us. If we love God then we won't experience sickness or failure. But we see in this passage that Jesus loved this particular family with a special type of love, and yet Lazarus still got sick and still died. People who love God will still experience pain, but we must not be discouraged. God has a plan and a purpose for those who love Him and those whom He loves.

When he heard this, Jesus said, "This sickness will not end in death. No, it is for God's glory so that God's Son may be glorified through it." (John 11:4)

We can be thankful in difficult times because we know God has a plan, and this plan is to bring glory and honor to our God.

When there is no Answer, God has a Reason

Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. So when he heard that Lazarus was sick, he stayed where he was two more days (John 11:5-6)

Why did Jesus stay where He was two more days after hearing that Lazarus was sick? This was a critical time for the family, and they were waiting in desperation. Why did Jesus stay where He was?

1. It was to show God's power in raising the dead

If Jesus went right away, it would have just been another healing. We could easily forget about it within the midst of all the other things Jesus did, but Jesus waited and Lazarus died. By raising him from the dead, there is no mistaking the power of Jesus and that it was only through Him that Lazarus could be alive and well.

1. It was so the people around them would believe

By waiting longer, it tested the faith of Mary and Martha. When Jesus did come and raise their brother, it gave substance and assurance to their faith. There is no doubt in their minds anywhere of who God is, and it strengthened their love. God will wait so that our faith will be made strong.

3. It was so our faith could be a witness to others

When Christians go through difficulties, there is a different response than when the world goes through difficulties. We have hope and a reason to have joy because we know God is still working in our lives. This is one of the greatest ways to share who Jesus is because others will be curious and wonder why we have joy in the midst of pain.

Miracles will happen when we have faith in the present

When Martha said, "If you had been here, my brother would not have died," it was a proclamation that she trusted Jesus to a certain limit. She had faith in Jesus that he could have healed Lazarus, but now that he was dead, Jesus could not. She believed that Jesus could not heal Lazarus now because death was too powerful and too final for Jesus to overcome.

My brothers and sisters, God works through our confession today. If we talk negatively and only

believe in the things He had done and not what he can do now, God's power will not work in our lives. Martha believed in the Jesus of the past, but she did not have the faith to believe that Jesus could work in her life today.

Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever. (Hebrews 13:8)

Jesus is the same God that we see working through the Bible. The Jesus we worship today was the same God who healed the sick, calmed the waves, and raised the dead. He is alive today and He is with us right now. He has power over all things and wants to perform a miracle in your life today.

But it is difficult to believe in miracles today. Maybe we haven't experienced it in our own lives yet, or maybe the world is telling us that the Jesus who performed miracles in the Bible is not able to or does not want to today. After Jesus tells Martha that He will raise Lazarus from the dead, Martha responds

Martha answered, "I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day." (John 11:24)

Even though Jesus wanted to raise Lazarus today, Martha thought He meant in the future. Martha believed in Jesus of the past and the Jesus of the future, but she could not believe in the Jesus of the present.

Jesus wants to come and help you today

Jesus will come in the future to judge the world and bring a new heaven and a new earth. But He also wants to do something in your life right now. The reason why nothing is happening in your life right

now is because you believe in a God that is from the past or from the future. But God is able to work a miracle in your life today. Do you confess with your mouth in the power of Jesus Christ and what He can do in your life right now?

Jesus arrives at the tomb. He asks the sisters to move away the stone covering the tomb, an impossible feat. But instead of doubting like before, they decide to believe, go to the stone, and push. We will not see God move in our lives if we stay still. He wants to move in our lives, but we must first act. Let us believe not only in the God of the past or the future, but also in the God of the present.

SHARING-----

1. Has there been a prayer request that hasn't been answered for a very long time, but after looking back, you've realized that God had a plan and a purpose for waiting? Please share.
2. After hearing about Lazarus, Jesus waited two more days. After hearing this sermon, why did Jesus wait? Which of these reasons stuck out to you?
3. The stone was covering the tomb. The body of Lazarus was inside and everyone knew he was dead. Yet they obeyed and moved the stone. Is there a part of your life that God is asking you to move in faith and trust in Him? Please share.