

People Jesus Met, part 45 – Lazarus (Waiting on the Lord)

*“Now a man named Lazarus was sick. He was from Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha.”
John 11:1*

“So the sisters sent word to Jesus saying, ‘Lord, the one You love is sick.’” John 11:3

“When Jesus heard this, He 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

“Now, Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. Yet when He heard Lazarus was sick, He stayed where He was for two more days.” John 11:5

Jesus made Mary and Martha wait for two days before He responded to their situation.

*“Then Jesus said to His disciples, ‘Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep; but I am going to wake him up.’”
John 11:11*

“His disciples replied, ‘Lord, if he sleeps, he will get better.’ Now Jesus had been speaking of his death, but His disciples thought he meant natural sleep.” John 11:12, 13

“So then Jesus told them plainly, ‘Lazarus is dead; and I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him.’” John 11:14, 15

“Upon their arrival, Jesus found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days. Bethany was less than two miles from Jerusalem, so many Jewish people had come to Martha and Mary to console them in the loss of their brother.” John 11:17-19

*“When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went out to meet Him, but Mary stayed at home.”
John 11:20*

“Martha said to Jesus, ‘Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died. But I know that God will give You whatever You ask.’” John 11:21

Mistake = she assumes that Jesus had to be physically present in order to cure someone.

*“. . . I am not fit for You to come under my roof . . . but just speak the word and my servant will be healed.”
Luke 7:6, 7*

If Jesus had wanted to heal Lazarus before he died, He could have done so – even from miles away!

“Jesus said to her, ‘Your brother shall rise again.’” John 11:23

“Martha answered, ‘I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.’” John 11:24

“Jesus said to her, ‘I AM the resurrection and the life.’” John 11:25

Jesus: “Martha, I don’t need to ask God the Father to do this. I have the power to do this all by Myself!”

“For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have life in Himself.” John 5:26

“For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son gives life to whomever He wishes.” John 5:21

When it came to the resurrection, Jesus wanted to convert Martha from believing in a “doctrine” to believing in a “Person.”

“These festivals are a shadow, but the reality is found in Christ.” Colossians 2:17

As followers of Jesus Christ, we are connected at the hip with the “Living Resurrection” Himself!

“He who believes in Me shall live even if he dies, and everyone who lives and believes in Me shall never die.” John 11:25

As believers in Jesus, our human bodies may die – but we ourselves will never die.

Instead, we go immediately to heaven to be with the Lord.

“To be absent from the body (death) is to be present with the Lord.” 2 Corinthians 5:8

“. . . I desire to depart (earth) and be with Christ.” Philippians 1:23

“‘Do you believe this?’ Jesus asked Martha.” John 11:26

“‘Yes, Lord,’ she said, ‘I believe You are the Christ, the Son of God, who was to come into the world.’” John 11:27

“And after Martha had said this, she went back and called her sister Mary aside and said, ‘The Teacher is here and is asking for you.’” John 11:28

“When Mary reached the place where Jesus was and saw Him, she fell at His feet and said, ‘Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died.’” John 11:32

“When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jewish people who had come along with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in His spirit and troubled. ‘Where have you laid him?’ He asked. ‘Come and see, Lord,’ they replied.” John 11:33, 34

“Jesus wept.” John 11:35

“Then the Jewish people said, ‘See how He loved him. Could not He who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?’” John 11:36, 37

“Jesus, once more deeply moved, came to the tomb. It was a cave with a stone laid across the entrance.” John 11:38

“‘Take away the stone,’ Jesus said. ‘But Lord,’ said Martha, ‘by this time there will be a bad odor, for he has been there four days.’” John 11:39

“Jesus said to her, ‘Didn’t I say to you that, if you believe, you will see the glory of God?’” John 11:40

“So they removed the stone. Then Jesus looked up and said, ‘Father, I thank You that You have heard Me. I know that You always hear Me, but I said this for the benefit of the people standing here, that they may believe that You sent Me.’” John 11:41, 42

“When He had said this, Jesus called out in a loud voice, ‘Lazarus, come out!’” John 11:43

“Then the dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen and with a cloth around his face. And Jesus said to the people there, ‘Unbind him and let him go.’” John 11:44

*“Therefore, many of the Jewish people who had come to visit Mary and beheld what Jesus had done, believed in Him. But some of them went to the rabbis and told them what Jesus had done.”
John 11:45, 46*

“Therefore, the chief priests and the rabbis convened a meeting and said, ‘What are we accomplishing? This man is performing many miracles. If we let Him go on like this, everyone will believe in Him, and then the Romans will come and take away both our position and our nation.’” John 11:47, 48

“So from that day on, the rabbis plotted to take Jesus’ life.” John 11:53

“The chief priests made plans to kill Lazarus as well, for on account of him, many Jewish people were going over to Jesus and believing in Him.” John 12:10

So What?

A key element in the events of John 11 is that Jesus made Mary and Martha wait for two days before coming to Bethany.

“Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died” John 11:21

Mary and Martha accused Jesus of:

#1 – Being late to the situation

#2 – And messing everything up because He didn’t do what they wanted . . . when they wanted it

I know what I want God to do and how I want Him to do it and when I want Him to do it – which is always RIGHT NOW!

“Why didn’t Jesus go immediately to Bethany and heal Lazarus? And why doesn’t God immediately step in and solve all my problems when I ask Him to?”

“‘My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways [neither is your timing My timing],’ says the LORD. ‘For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts are higher than your thoughts [and My timing higher than your timing].’” Isaiah 55:8

With God, timing is everything!

Jesus didn’t want to get to Bethany when Lazarus was sick and heal him.

Jesus wanted to get there when Lazarus was stone-cold dead and resurrect him – so that He could get maximum glory from it all!

God’s perfect will had a perfect timing.

Lesson of John 11 = for God to get maximum glory from our lives, our lives must run on His timing and not ours.

This means that – often – we must be willing to “wait” for God’s perfect timing in our lives.

“Wait on the LORD; be strong and let your heart take courage; yes, wait on the LORD.” Psalm 27:14

“Rest in the LORD and wait patiently for Him.” Psalm 37:7

“I wait for the LORD and in His Word I do hope.” Psalm 130:5

“Those who wait on Me shall never be put to shame.” Isaiah 49:23

God is never early . . .

God is never late . . .

God is always right on schedule (His schedule) and right on time (His time).

“The mind of man plans his way but the LORD directs his steps.” Proverbs 16:9

True men/women of God believe that God has better ways of getting us:

Where we need to be . . .

When we need to be there . . .

Than we could ever plan for ourselves

Not only: “Have I discerned God’s will for this situation?”

But also: “Have I discerned God’s timing for this situation?”

How exactly will God let me know when He wants me to wait on Him?”

Tool #1 – Circumstances

When God uses circumstances to tell us to “wait on Him” – it’s critical that we submit to God and resist the temptation to take matters in our own hands in fleshly impetuosity.

Tool #2 – People in authority over us

Tool #3 – God’s own communication directly to our heart

“I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you and guide you.” Psalm 32:8

Most often, God’s signal as to whether His timing is now . . . or whether He wants us to wait . . . will come on our knees.

When God made Mary and Martha wait, it was because He was setting everything up (Ephesians 3:20) to do “exceedingly abundantly beyond all that they asked.”

“Wait on the LORD; be strong and take courage; and wait patiently for the LORD.” Psalm 27:14

“Those who wait on Me shall never be put to shame.” Isaiah 49:23