

Jesus Has Perfect Timing

Chapters 11 and 12 mark the conclusion of Jesus' public ministry.

How would you characterize Jesus' relationship with this family of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus? Jesus has established a love relationship with them. They know He loves them. They are secure in His love. As we get to know the Savior, He establishes the same kind of love relationship with us. It comes as a product of spending time with Him.

When Lazarus was sick and his sisters sent word for Jesus to come, what did He say was the purpose of this sickness? So that God's glory might be revealed and God's Son would be glorified.

Does that remind you of any other miracle that we've seen in the Gospel of John? Jesus made a similar comment concerning the blind man in John 9:3 "...so that the work of God might be displayed in his life."

We know that the bottom line purpose of any miracle is to glorify God. What does it mean to glorify God? It means to bring Him honor through what we say, how we act, and how we think. To glorify God means we make Him known to others. To glorify God means we have a heartfelt gratitude. We glorify God through our faith (trust). We glorify God through our love. We glorify God through our desire to obey Him (our obedience). We glorify God through our desire to know Him. Glorifying God means to acknowledge Him in all areas of life.

Application: **Do you think God ever brings adversity into our lives so that He might be glorified like He did with Mary and Martha? Share some real life examples.**

When Jesus got the word about Lazarus what does He do? Waits two days

Remember that Jesus has already healed from a distance in John 4. Why doesn't He do the same thing here? Why does He stay two more days? The Bible doesn't tell us specifically. But raising a prominent Jew from the dead would catch a lot more attention than healing him from any sickness would.

What does Jesus mean in verses 9-10?

- On a spiritual level, men who do not "have the light" stumble when they attempt to walk—like walking in the darkness. Only when one follows Jesus as the "light of the world" can one go about "this present darkness" in safety. Jesus is the light whereby a man may walk and not stumble. Without Him we are in darkness.
- On the physical level, it refers to the sun. In Jesus' day there were no streetlights to illumine the cities. In fact, there was little artificial lighting of any kind. So when the day ends, a man's work has to be done. To be abroad after nightfall is to stumble and risk injury. On this level the words encourage a person to use time wisely.

Verse 15 Why is Jesus glad that Lazarus has died? He is glad because He knows that He will raise Lazarus and that this miracle will strengthen the faith of many. The faith of the disciples will be strengthened. The faith of Martha and Mary will be strengthened. Indeed, many who at that time do not even have faith will come to it as a result of this dramatic resurrection (verse 45). Waiting two days resulted in a bigger miracle with a bigger impact.

What do you make of Thomas' comment? Thomas expresses what it means to be a disciple of Jesus. He is willing to go with Jesus, even if it means dying with Him. Thomas doesn't understand all that Jesus said or meant. But what he does know is enough to make him willing to die with and for Jesus. This is the first reference in the Gospels to Thomas saying something. Thomas gets a bad rap as a doubter, but here his devotion to Jesus and his courage stand out.

How long has Lazarus been dead when Jesus arrives? He was dead for four days. There is a Jewish belief that the soul stays near the grave for three days hoping to return to the body. But on the fourth day decomposition sets in and the soul finally leaves. After that, there is no hope of resuscitation.

How do both Martha and Mary respond to Jesus? "If you had been here, my brother would not have died." The sisters are having a hard time understanding Jesus' delay. But they are trying to trust that Jesus has a purpose.

Application: **What are some of the purposes of God's delays in our lives?** God uses delays to mold our wills to line up with His, to quiet us so we won't get ahead of Him, and to strengthen our faith. Sometimes He also does it simply to bring honor to His name.

In verse 25 Jesus states the fifth I AM. The resurrection and the life

According to verses 25 and 26 what is the requirement for eternal life? Belief. Nothing beyond faith is required to be saved.

How does Martha respond to Jesus in verses 21, 24, and 27? She gets it! She understands who Jesus is. Martha makes a profession of faith. This is a clear expression of saving faith.

Note: Mary is found three times in the Gospel record, and each time she is at the feet of Jesus

How does Jesus respond to Mary? He was deeply moved.

Why does Jesus weep? The Bible doesn't tell us but this phrase can imply anger or sorrow—against death, the consequence of sin (particularly unbelief), because of the fall, and Satan's evil work. Or distress that the mourners, and even His close friends, do not understand what He had come to do about death. Or Jesus is identifying with His friends, feeling their grief, sympathy over loss of Lazarus. Or perhaps He is weeping over the condition of the people. Jesus sees them as sheep without a shepherd and feels sorry for them.

What does Jesus' weeping tell us about Him? He is an emotional person: empathic, sympathetic, caring, loving. Weeping is a picture of Jesus' humanity. Jesus experienced grief, as we do. Jesus' tears are proof of His compassion for fallen humanity. We see here Jesus' authority over humankind's greatest and last enemy: death.

Application: This is much more than a nice story of two sisters, a brother, and Jesus. What applications do you see and what do they reveal about God? Being at the feet of Jesus is better than service. Trust in Jesus even when the circumstances make no sense. He will weep with you—trust His heart.

Verses 38-57

We now come to the most impressive miracle in the Gospel—the resurrection of Lazarus from the dead. This is the last and greatest of Jesus' miracles before His own resurrection.

What is Jesus' emotional state as He approaches the tomb of Lazarus? Jesus again feels the same “deeply moved” emotion as when He saw the weeping of Mary and the mourners in verse 33.

Note the sequence Jesus states in verse 40: “if you believed, you would see.” Not the other way around. Plenty of people had seen Jesus but not believed. It has always been the case that those whose minds are made up to oppose what Christ stands for will not be convinced by any amount of evidence.

What is the response of the people in verses 45 and 46? They are polarized. Again Jesus' words and works divide the Jews. Even this most powerful miracle fails to convince some that Jesus is God's Son.

What are some of the differences between the resurrections of Lazarus and Jesus? Lazarus had to die again. Lazarus arose with the same physical body that went into his tomb, but Jesus arose with a spiritual body that could pass through solid objects and never died again. Lazarus was raised by Jesus' power. Jesus was raised by His own (God's) power.

What is Caiaphas really saying in verses 49-50? It's okay to execute an innocent person if it secures the advantage and provides a positive impact for the nation. The end justifies the means. He views Jesus' death as a sacrifice that is necessary for the welfare of the nation—and its leaders. Jesus' sacrificial death is precisely God's intention—though for very a different reason. Caiaphas views Jesus as a scapegoat whose sacrifice would protect Israel's leaders. He unknowingly prophesies Jesus' death.

Why does Jesus withdraw to a private place? They are plotting to take His life. His time has not yet come.

MEMORIZE: John 11:25-26