

Why Didn't He Do Something?

John 11

Have you ever cried out to God for help in a crisis & wondered why He didn't seem to respond?

You were out of work & looking for a job, you asked God to open a particular opportunity for you, but it never happened.

A member of your family was dying & pleaded with God for their life, but He chose to take them.

Why is it that just when we most desire to see God do something, He *seems* to ignore our appeal & leave us in our struggle. *Where's God when we need Him?*

This morning we're going to look in on a family that--along with their neighbors & friends--was going through such a struggle.

Last of 7 signs John presents to demonstrate that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, so that we might believe and receive the gift of eternal life.

RESURRECTION OF LAZARUS 11:1-44

Delay & Explanation 11:1-16

Jesus delays His departure to save Lazarus so that God will be glorified & His followers will believe in Him 1-16

Jesus receives word that a family He loves dearly is in crisis.

One of His best friends is about to die.

His sisters send word for Him to come quickly and save him.

Jesus loved them.

So, "He hurries up, & *waits!*"

Knowing that love is sacrificing, it seems strange that He stayed put for 2 days.

God's in charge. He is able to awaken Lazarus whenever He wishes. *He's in no hurry!*

SO WHY DID HE WAIT 2 DAYS? *If He loves Him, why doesn't He come help him?*

Have YOU ever wondered about that?

Have you ever been in a place where you needed God to come to your rescue & He doesn't come?

Have you ever cried out to God in a crisis & found Him silent? He doesn't come when you need Him?

He expresses 2 purposes for His delay--same 2 we find in the Gospel at large.

1. Jesus delays His intervention so God will receive Glory 11:4.

"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."

John's illness isn't going to *END* in death--though it will go there, it doesn't finish there!

Our problem is we don't want it to GO there

Jesus' followers don't understand how God's way of getting glory, may not be what we expect.

God gets glory when His Son gets glory!

2nd reason for delay:

2. Jesus delays His intervention so His followers will trust Him

11:15 *"for your sake I am glad that I was not there, so that you may believe."*

The delay is so that they might trust Him.

Encouragement of the Sisters 11:17-37 17-20

"When Jesus came, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb 4 days. ¹⁸Bethany was near Jerusalem, about 2 mi. off, ¹⁹& many of the Jews had come to Martha & Mary to console them concerning their brother. ²⁰So when Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went & met him, but Mary remained seated in the house"

When Jesus arrives, He ministers to each sister individually, according to their personal need--He knows just what each one needs.

Martha's attitude: 21-27

*"Lord, if You had **been here**, my brother would not have died."* **21**

Why didn't you come? You could have DONE something!

Like us, when confronted by a crisis, Martha wanted her brother *delivered from* death.

Jesus wanted Lazarus to *triumph over* death.

How did Jesus respond to her question?

"I am the resurrection & the life! He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; & whoever lives & believes in me will never die." **25-26**

Jesus assured her that He is capable of raising Lazarus.

It's NOT too late! I can *still* raise Him!

Martha believed he would be raised in *the last day*; but not *that* day! It's *too late* now! *Jesus wasn't there when they needed Him!*

She didn't expect the Jesus who wasn't there when she needed Him, to fulfill the desire of her heart now.

Mary's attitude: 28-37

Mary didn't go out to meet Jesus when he came. ²⁰

She just sat at home.

It appears she is frustrated with Him--disappointed perhaps.

He had let them down.

What's the point in His coming NOW?

Why weren't you here when we needed you?

Nevertheless, when He called her, she went quickly to Him!

She fell at His feet.

She has same question that Martha raised:

"Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died." **32**

Why didn't you answer when we called you? Why didn't you come?

She wept.

She needed comfort.

How did He respond to her question?

He wept with her!

Then he set out to solve her problem.

What was the crowd's question?

The crowd asked same basic question: *"Couldn't He who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?"* **37**

Sisters & crowd want to know: **WHY didn't Jesus come when they called?**

3rd part of story answers question the crowd asked in 37 WATCH how He responds:

Resurrection of Lazarus

38-44 *"Then Jesus, deeply moved again, came to the tomb. It was a cave, & a stone lay against it. ³⁹Jesus said, 'Take away the stone.' Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, 'Lord, by this time there will be an odor, for he's been dead 4 days.' ⁴⁰Jesus said to her, 'Did I not tell you that if you believed you would see the glory of God?' ⁴¹So they took away the stone. Jesus lifted up his eyes & said, 'Father, I thank you that you have heard me. ⁴²I knew that you always hear me, but I said this on account of the people standing around, that they may believe that you sent me.' ⁴³When he had said these things, he cried out with a loud voice, 'Lazarus, come out.' ⁴⁴The man who had died came out, his hands & feet bound with linen strips, & his face wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, 'Unbind him, & let him go.'"*

Jesus COULD do something!

Jesus is able to raise Lazarus from the dead!

This was more than any of them expected.

They wanted Jesus to come.

They knew He could heal their brother.

They never expected He could raise Him from the dead.

They wanted to see Lazarus again--but not after 4 days in the grave!!!

What did this miracle accomplish? The same **two purposes**:

1. The people see the glory of God 40

2. The people believe in Him 42

His words and works combine to testify that in Him is life.

Those who believe in Him will never die.

HOW DO THE PEOPLE RESPOND TO WHAT THEY SEE?

Response to the Miracle

11:45-53 *"Many of the Jews therefore, who had come with Mary & had seen what he did, believed in him, ⁴⁶but some of them went to the Pharisees & told them what Jesus had done.*

⁴⁷So the chief priests & the Pharisees gathered the council & said, 'What are we to do? For this

man performs many signs. ⁴⁸If we let him go on like this, everyone will believe in him, & the Romans will come & take away both our place & our nation.” ⁴⁹But one of them, Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, said to them, “You know nothing at all. ⁵⁰Nor do you understand that it is better for you that one man should die for the people, not that the whole nation should perish.” ⁵¹He didn’t say this of his own accord, but being high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the nation, ⁵² & not for the nation only, but also to gather into one the children of God who are scattered abroad. ⁵³So from that day on they made plans to put him to death.”

The final sign should serve as a conclusive proof that Jesus is Messiah, and that He is God's Son.

They should listen to Him.

The sign provokes *two distinct responses*:

1. When Jews saw what Jesus did, many trusted in Him 45

2. BUT OTHERS, . . .

saw what He did & decided to do something-- to stop Him!

He was able to raise Lazarus from the dead.

Conclusive sign becomes cause to kill Jesus & Lazarus, & to destroy the evidence. 11:48; 12:9-11 12:37-40, 43

48 If we leave him alone everyone will trust Him!

The longer they wait, the greater the threat

Therefore, they make plans to eliminate Him.

12:9-11 “A large crowd of Jews found out that Jesus was there and came, not only because of Him, but also to see Lazarus, whom He had raised from the dead. So the chief priests made plans to kill Lazarus as well, for on account of him many of the Jews were going over to Jesus and putting their faith in Him.”

Prophecy of the unbelieving priest 49-53

Leaders feared what Romans would do because of Jesus.

Caiaphas advises them:

Not to worry!

One can die in place of the people. 50

The people can receive life through the death of one!

He had no idea what He was saying!

God’s plan is that One die--not just for Jews, but for all God’s people.

51-52

His death makes it possible for us to become ONE!

Jesus withdrew because the time had not yet come. Right plan--wrong time!

Even in His death, Jesus controlled the timing.

The miracle offers several **Alternative Responses** to what Jesus did:

Leaders & many people: UNBELIEF & REJECTION

Jesus' followers: Recognize His glory & TRUST HIM.

Martha & Mary: In times of adversity, we cry out to Him, but sometimes are left to question *why Jesus doesn't DO something?!!*

The miracle answers our question:

Sometimes God doesn't DO something,

because doing what we want God to do isn't His best plan for us!

Sometimes delaying the answer results in GLORY for God.

Sometimes delaying the answer forces us to TRUST Him.

When we see how He works it all out,

1. He gets the GLORY.

2. We learn to TRUST HIM!

Lazarus: His lifestory; a witness: *"I was dead, but Jesus gave me new life!"*