

Mary, Martha and their Friends

Message 05 of the series "Face to Face"

A. One day Jesus' friend Lazarus became sick and died.

"A man named Lazarus was sick. He lived in Bethany with his sisters, Mary and Martha. ...So the two sisters sent a message to Jesus telling him, 'Lord, your dear friend is very sick.' But when Jesus heard about it he said, 'Lazarus's sickness will not end in death. No, it happened for the glory of God so that the Son of God will receive glory from this.' So although Jesus loved Martha, Mary, and Lazarus, he stayed where he was for the next two days. Finally, he said to his disciples, 'Let's go back to Judea.' But his disciples objected. 'Rabbi,' they said, 'only a few days ago the people in Judea were trying to stone you. Are you going there again?' Jesus replied... 'Lazarus is dead. And for your sakes, I'm glad I wasn't there, for now you will really believe...'" John 11:1-15 (NLT)

1. Jesus has friends.

"And the scripture was fulfilled that says, 'Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness,' and he was called God's friend." James 2:23 (NIV)

"You are my friends if you do what I command. I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you." John 15:14-15 (NIV)

2. Jesus doesn't always do things the way we want Him to do things.

"My thoughts are nothing like your thoughts,' says the Lord. 'And my ways are far beyond anything you could imagine. For just as the heavens are higher than the earth, so my ways are higher than your ways and my thoughts higher than your thoughts.'" Isaiah 55:8-9 (NLT)

B. Even though He had sent word that "Lazarus's sickness will not end in death," Jesus had a hard time convincing people that He wasn't too late.

"When Jesus arrived at Bethany, he was told that Lazarus had already been in his grave for four days... When Martha got word that Jesus was coming, she went to meet him... 'Lord, if only you had been here, my brother would not have died. But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask.' Jesus told her, 'Your brother will rise again.' 'Yes,' Martha said, 'he will rise when everyone else rises, at the last day.' Jesus told her, 'I am the resurrection and the life. Anyone who believes in me will live, even after dying. Everyone who lives in me and believes in me will never ever die. Do you believe this, Martha?' 'Yes, Lord,' she told him... When Mary arrived and saw Jesus, she fell at his feet and said, 'Lord, if only you had been here, my brother would not have died.' When Jesus saw her weeping and saw the other people wailing with her, a deep anger welled up within him, and he was deeply troubled. 'Where have you put him?' he asked them. They told him, 'Lord, come and see.' Then Jesus wept. The people who were standing nearby said, 'See how much he loved him!' But some said, 'This man healed a blind man. Couldn't he have kept Lazarus from dying?' Jesus was still angry as he arrived at the tomb, a cave with a stone rolled across its entrance." John 11:17-38 (NLT)

1. God's timing is not always our timing.

Then one of them said, "I will return to you about this time next year, and your wife, Sarah, will have a son!" Sarah was listening to this conversation from the tent. Abraham and Sarah were both very old by this time, and Sarah was long past the age of having children. So she laughed silently to herself and said, "How could a worn-out woman like me enjoy such pleasure, especially when my master—my husband—is also so old?" Then the LORD said to Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh? Why did she say, 'Can an old woman like me have a baby?' Is anything too hard for the LORD? I will return about this time next year, and Sarah will have a son." Genesis 18:10-14 (NLT)

2. Jesus got deeply troubled by their lack of faith.

"And it is impossible to please God without faith. Anyone who wants to come to him must believe that God exists and that he rewards those who sincerely seek him." Hebrews 11:6 (NLT)

"Then Jesus got into the boat and started across the lake with his disciples. Suddenly, a fierce storm struck the lake, with waves breaking into the boat. But Jesus was sleeping. The disciples went and woke him up, shouting, 'Lord, save us! We're going to drown!' Jesus responded, 'Why are you afraid? You have so little faith!' Then he got up and rebuked the wind and waves, and suddenly there was a great calm." Matthew 8:23-26 (NLT)

C. Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead.

“Roll the stone aside,’ Jesus told them. But Martha, the dead man’s sister, protested, ‘Lord, he has been dead for four days. The smell will be terrible.’ Jesus responded, ‘Didn’t I tell you that you would see God’s glory if you believe?’ So they rolled the stone aside. Then Jesus looked up to heaven and said, ‘Father, thank you for hearing me. You always hear me, but I said it out loud for the sake of all these people standing here, so that they will believe you sent me.’ Then Jesus shouted, ‘Lazarus, come out!’ And the dead man came out, his hands and feet bound in grave clothes, his face wrapped in a head cloth. Jesus told them, ‘Unwrap him and let him go!’ Many of the people who were with Mary believed in Jesus when they saw this happen.”

John 11:39-45 (NLT)

1. Jesus was late because He wanted to mature their faith.

“These trials will show that your faith is genuine. It is being tested as fire tests and purifies gold—though your faith is far more precious than mere gold. So when your faith remains strong through many trials, it will bring you much praise and glory and honor on the day when Jesus Christ is revealed to the whole world.” 1 Peter 1:7 (NLT)

“Dear brothers and sisters, when troubles of any kind come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy. For you know that when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow. So let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed, you will be perfect and complete, needing nothing.”

James 1:2-4 (NLT)

2. Jesus wants us to trust Him.

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding. Seek his will in all you do, and he will show you which path to take.” Proverbs 3:5-6 (NLT)

“Commit your way to the LORD; trust in him, and he will act.” Psalm 37:5 (ESV)

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