

GOSPEL OF JOHN
WHERE IS THE LORD WHEN WE NEED HIM?
JOHN 11:1-46

Introduction

Here we find a situation where it **appeared** on the surface that the Lord Jesus had let some of His friends down in a great time of need in their lives—

1. **There Was Lazarus (Vs 1-3)**—Lazarus was Jesus’ friend who was sick. We’re not told if he was conscious when they sent for Jesus, but if He was don’t you know that he was longing for Jesus to appear!

But his health situation grew worse and four days before Jesus made it to Bethany to be able to heal him, he died.

2. **There Were Lazarus’ sisters— Mary and Martha.** We can sense from both of their conversations with Jesus that there was disappointment. (Vs 3, 21, 32)
3. **There Were Jesus’ disciples—(Vs 7, 12-16)**
4. **Plus there were some others (comforters)**— Some nameless folks in the crowd whose conversation indicates that they too believed that Jesus had somehow let Lazarus and his sisters down. (Vs 37)

During this time when they had a great need, it seemed as if Jesus didn’t care. **But the Scripture is clear about Jesus’ love for Martha, Mary and Lazarus!** (Vs 5)

Have you been there? Have you ever had some of those times when **you looked for the LORD to show up and help you and/or your loved one through some great time of need?** And then when things didn’t turn out the way you thought they would (or should)...well, you couldn’t seem to make sense of where Jesus was in it all...and then maybe there was the temptation to think that somehow the LORD didn’t care? (Satan loves to play that **“Jesus doesn’t care!”** card with us!)

So, where is the LORD in times like we see here? When we need Him but we can’t seem to find Him? Well, in our Scripture today, we see these folks that were struggling with some of the same issues!

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And there are some **principles** that we find here in *John 11* that can help us when we face those times of wondering where the LORD is and if He cares!

- I. **WE CAN LOVE THE LORD AND WE CAN STILL GET HURT!**
(Vs 1-2)

A. **Lazarus Loved The LORD But Still Got Sick And Died.**

B. **Job Loved The LORD And Still Got Hurt.**

- C. **There Have Been Many Others In The Past Who Loved The LORD But Got Hurt.**

Hebrews 11:36-39—“And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; (Of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise:”

- D. **We LOVE The Lord, But Most Of Us, If Not All Of Us Have Been Deeply Wounded At Some Time And Have Hurt Or Are Hurting To Some Degree.**

*James 5:10-11—“Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience. Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, **and have seen the end of the Lord;** that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.”*

John 16:33—“These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.”

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II. THE LORD CAN LOVE US AND WE CAN STILL GET HURT!

(Vs 3, 5)

Our Suffering **does not** disprove the love of the LORD!

1 John 3:16—“Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us:”

1 John 4:9—“In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.”

Anytime we are tempted to doubt the love of the LORD we need to stop and look at the cross again because we have allowed our circumstances to cloud our view of Calvary!

III. THE LORD’S GLORY IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN OUR COMFORT! *(Vs 4)*

Our problem is that often we focus on **ourselves** more than on the **LORD!**

And in our selfishness, a lot of times, **our focus is on our wanting to be delivered instead of our wanting God to be glorified!**

We remember Paul’s thorn in the flesh that he spoke about?

2 Corinthians 12:8-10—“...And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. **Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.** Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ’s sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.”

Philippians 3:10—“That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death”

1 Corinthians 10:31—“Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or **whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.**” (Suffering ?)

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IV. WHEN THE LORD DELAYS HE ALWAYS HAS A PURPOSE!

(Vs 6)

The LORD’s delays may have any number of purposes, but they always have a purpose:

1. Sometimes Delays May Come To Purify Our Motives!
2. Sometimes Delays May Come To Purge Our Sin!
3. Sometimes Delays May Come To Further Develop Our Faith!
4. Sometimes Delays May Come To Complete A Work In Us!
5. Sometimes Delays May Come To Build Character In Us!

On this point, I must also point out that on this side of eternity we may **never know what that purpose is!**

I personally know a family who couldn’t make sense out of a personal tragedy that happened to one of their family members years before I came to know them. As they looked at what happened, they could not see how the LORD got any glory out of it at all! And rather than just trust the LORD’s purposes in it all they allowed that trial to drag them down and keep them down! That’s not what God wants!

Please know that the LORD is not obligated to show us His purposes! He does not owe us an answer to the question, “**Why?**”

Remember, Job questioned, “**Why?**” but God answered, “**Who?**”

V. THE LORD’S DELAYS CAN BE SILENT TIMES! *(Vs 17, 21)*

There is no indication from Scripture that Jesus sent word to Martha and Mary ahead of time about what His plans were and even when He got there He did not let them in on what He was about to do.

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We are not told how long these ladies had lived in **worry** over their dying brother! Do you think while they were waiting they might have been *“in a tizzy?”* And then their **worry** turned to **grief** as he died! Four days after Lazarus died, then Jesus finally showed up.

For them it had been a silent time when they heard nothing from the LORD!

It was the same way in Job’s life! He was wanting to hear from the LORD **early on** about what was happening and why it was happening, but the LORD delayed revealing Himself to Job.

VI. TRAGEDY IN OUR LIVES DOES NOT PROVE THE LORD’S INABILITY!

One thing that most everyone agreed on was that Jesus had the ability to have healed Lazarus:

Martha in Verse 21 - *“Then said Martha unto Jesus, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.”*

Mary in Verse 32 - *“Then when Mary was come where Jesus was, and saw him, she fell down at his feet, saying unto him, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.”*

The crowd in Verse 37 - *“And some of them said, Could not this man, which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died? ”*

Even Jesus in Verse 15 - *“...I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, to the intent ye may believe...”*

The idea here is that **if Jesus had been there, yes, He could have and would have healed Lazarus.** But, since Jesus **had not** been present, they would see a bigger miracle, a resurrection.

Ironically enough, Jesus was saying, *‘It’s a good thing I wasn’t there!’*

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VII. THE LORD DOES NOT MEET OUR HURTS WITH INDIFFERENCE! (Vs 33-36)

Have you ever been tempted to just say—*“LORD, Do you even care?”*

Sometimes in the storms of life we get just like his disciples who said, *“Carest thou not that we perish?”* But listen, **with Jesus in the boat, they weren’t going to perish!**

Did you catch the words to the special this morning?

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“Does Jesus Care?”

“Does Jesus care when my heart is pained too deeply for mirth and song? As the burdens press, and the cares distress, and the way grows weary and long?

Does Jesus care when my way is dark with a nameless dread and fear? As the day light fades into deep night shades does He care enough to be near?

Does Jesus care when I’ve tried and failed to resist some temptation strong? When for my deep grief I find no relief, though my tears flow all the night long.

Does Jesus care when I’ve said good-bye to the dearest on earth to me, And my sad heart aches till it nearly breaks—Is it aught to Him? Does He see?

*Oh yes, He cares; I know He cares, **His heart is touched with my grief;** When the days are weary, the long nights dreary, I know my Savior cares.”*

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Hebrews 2:18—*“For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.”*

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Hebrews 4:15-16—“For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.”

1 Peter 5:7—“Casting all your care upon Him; for He careth for you.”

VIII. THE LORD USES TRAGEDY AND IMPOSSIBILITY TO REVEAL HIMSELF TO US IN GREATER WAYS! (Vs 25, 39-40)

In *Genesis 22:13-14*, up on Mount Moriah, Abraham learned that the Lord was the *Jehovah-Jireh*. Which means, “*The Lord will provide.*”

In *Exodus 17:15*, after winning the battle against Amalek, Moses found God to be *Jehovah-Nissi...* “*The Lord my banner.*”

We could go on and speak of others who through difficult trials and circumstances and impossibilities **learned more about the LORD through those things than they ever could apart from them!**

Conclusion

Are you in difficult trials? Is the weight of care burdening you down? Are you wondering where the LORD is in your hour of need?

Where is Jesus when we need Him? I believe it is stated well in the Hymn

“Just When I Need Him Most.”

“Just when I need Him, Jesus is Near; Just when I falter, just when I fear.

Ready to help me, ready to cheer; Just when I need Him Most.

Just when I need Him, Jesus is True; Never forsaking all the way through

Giving for burdens pleasures anew; Just when I need Him Most.

Just when I need Him, Jesus is strong; Bearing my burdens all the day long

For all my sorrow giving a song; Just when I need Him Most.

Just when I need Him, He is my all; Answering when upon Him I call

Tenderly watching lest I should fall, Just when I need Him most”

Just when I need Him most, Just when I need Him Most,

Jesus is near to comfort and cheer, Just when I need Him Most.

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Then there is “*Standing Somewhere In The Shadows You’ll Find Jesus.*”

“Standing somewhere in the shadows you'll find Jesus

He's the one who always cares and understands

Standing in the shadows you will find Him

And you'll know Him by the nail prints in His hand”

Do you feel that the LORD has forgotten you or forsaken you? He hasn't! He is there for you even if you can't sense Him! You may think He's late, but He's always right on time! Wait on Him!