

GOD'S PERSPECTIVE IN UNCERTAINTY AND LOSS

John 11

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GOD SOMETIMES USES UNCERTAINTY AND PAIN TO REVEAL HIMSELF MORE FULLY.

Now a certain man was ill, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. ²It was Mary who anointed the Lord with ointment and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was ill. ³So the sisters sent to him, saying, "Lord, he whom you love is ill."⁴ But 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." ⁵Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. ⁶So, when he heard that Lazarus was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was. ⁷Then after this he said to the disciples, "Let us go to Judea again."⁸ The disciples said to him, "Rabbi, the Jews were just now seeking to stone you, and are you going there again?"⁹ Jesus answered, "Are there not twelve hours in the day? If anyone walks in the day, he does not stumble, because he sees the light of this world. ¹⁰But if anyone walks in the night, he stumbles, because the light is not in him."¹¹ After saying these things, he said to them, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I go to awaken him."¹² The disciples said to him, "Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will recover."¹³ Now Jesus had spoken of his death, but they thought that he meant taking rest in sleep. ¹⁴Then Jesus told them plainly, "Lazarus has died, ¹⁵and for your sake I am glad that I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him."¹⁶ So Thomas, called the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with him." John 11:1-16 (English Standard Version)

The glory of the LORD dwelt on Mount Sinai . . . Now the appearance of the glory of the LORD was like a devouring fire . . . Exodus 24:16-17 (ESV)

"Glory" = the visible manifestation of God

THE MOST IMPORTANT REALITY IN LIFE OR DEATH IS JESUS.

Now when Jesus came, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days. ¹⁸Bethany was near Jerusalem, about two miles off, ¹⁹and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them concerning their brother. ²⁰So when Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, but Mary remained seated in the house. ²¹Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. ²²But even now I know that whatever you ask from God, God will give you."²³ Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again."²⁴ Martha said to him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day."²⁵ Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, ²⁶and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?"²⁷ She said to him, "Yes, Lord; I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who is coming into the world." John 11:17-27 (ESV)

For no matter how many promises God has made, they are “Yes” in Christ . . .
2 Corinthians 1:20 (New International Version)

“I tell you the truth, if anyone keeps my word, he will never see death.” John 8:51 (NIV)

GOD IS TROUBLED WHEN, IN OUR PAIN, WE FORGET HIS PERSPECTIVE.

Then she returned to Mary. She called Mary aside from the mourners and told her, “The Teacher is here and wants to see you.”²⁹ So Mary immediately went to him.³⁰ Jesus had stayed outside the village, at the place where Martha met him.³¹ When the people who were at the house consoling Mary saw her leave so hastily, they assumed she was going to Lazarus’s grave to weep. So they followed her there.³² 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.”³³ 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.³⁴ “Where have you put him?” he asked them. They told him, “Lord, come and see.”³⁵ Then Jesus wept.³⁶ The people who were standing nearby said, “See how much he loved him!”³⁷ But some said, “This man healed a blind man. Couldn’t he have kept Lazarus from dying?” John 11:28-37 (New Living Translation)

GOD’S WORKS ARE SIGNS THAT POINT TO HIS ULTIMATE SOLUTION TO SIN AND DEATH.

Then Jesus, deeply moved again, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone lay against it.³⁹ Jesus 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 has been dead four days.”⁴⁰ Jesus said to her, “Did I not tell you that if you believed you would see the glory of God?”⁴¹ So they took away the stone. And Jesus lifted up his eyes and said, “Father, I thank you that you have heard me.⁴² I 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.”⁴³ When he had said these things, he cried out with a loud voice, “Lazarus, come out.”⁴⁴ The man who had died came out, his hands and feet bound with linen strips, and his face wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, “Unbind him, and let him go.” John 11:38-44 (ESV)