



4/30/26

So... I've probably told you this before, but I can't help but go through today's passage without bringing up Carman's song, Lazarus, Come Forth. No words from me are necessary. Here's a YouTube

link... https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QKb5U8LHRZI&list=RDQKb5U8LHRZI&start_radio=1

*Blessings,
Jonna*

John 11:1-44

I love this passage. It has surprises for me AND huge surprises for those who were there. I love how Jesus always surprises us... and His surprises are always good.

There was a guy named Lazarus of Bethany. We first learn of him with his sisters, Mary (who later anointed Jesus with ointment and wiped His feet with her hair) and Martha (who got really mad at Him and told Him what to do... but He was compassionate), in Luke 10. They all loved Jesus very much. Sometime between the time of Luke 10 and John 11, Lazarus became very sick.

Mary and Martha did the exact thing God wanted them to do... and what He wants me to do... they asked Him for help. They sent word to Jesus saying, "Lord, he whom You love is ill." Jesus 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." Okay... so Lazarus isn't going to die, right? Wrong. What??? Can I trust God's promises or not??? Yes, I can. But I need to remember that God is able to keep His promises in very surprising ways.

Here's a surprise... "Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus." That part's not the surprise... but how cool is this... Mary and Martha sent word to Jesus saying that He loved Lazarus. But Jesus wants it to be clear that He also loved Mary and Martha. Women were not respected as men were in that day... but Jesus respected them! Women have never been treated as less by Jesus.

Here's the part that's a surprise... Jesus loved them, SO He stayed two more days. To my mind, that doesn't make sense!!! Shouldn't He have gone right away if He loved them? This tells me that no circumstance defines God's love for me. In other words, I should never define God's love according to my circumstances. I should define my circumstances according to God's love. I can always know that He has not abandoned me, and He will always prove His love to me, even if it doesn't happen the way I think it should.

After the 2 days, Jesus told the disciples it was time to go see Lazarus. The disciples figured they knew better than Jesus. Maybe He needed to be reminded of the dangers of that trip. Jews from that region already tried to kill Him! Does that concern Jesus? No. He's totally in control.

I love this part. The disciples were kind of clueless, as I often am. It gives me a lot of hope. Jesus said to them, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I go to awaken him." Hmm... He said that about a 12-year-old girl whom He raise from the dead when she had died. Did the boys not remember that? Nope. They said, "Lord, if he's fallen asleep, he'll recover." How often do I, like the disciples, think I know what's going on and there's so much I don't see??? Jesus had to speak plainly to them as I know He has to speak plainly to me. In fact, sometimes I remind Him, "Lord, You know how dense I can be! Please make Your plan clear to me so that I don't do something really dumb." It always goes well when I wait for Him to reveal His plan... not so much when I try to take matters in my own hands.

Anyway, "Then Jesus told them plainly, 'Lazarus has died, and for your sake I am glad that I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him.'" You gotta love Thomas's response. "Okay, let us also go with Jesus. He's never gonna make it through this alive, but we can die with Him." I guess this is one of the reasons they call him "doubting Thomas."

When they arrived, Martha came to Jesus first. She said, "Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died. But even now I know that whatever You ask from God, God will give You." So, I would think she was asking Jesus to raise Lazarus from the dead. But I don't think she was, because when Jesus said, "Your brother will rise again," Martha said, "Yeah, I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day," like when God takes us all home. I hope to ask her what she meant when I meet her someday. But this is such a great picture for me of how God does not expect our faith to be perfect. He grows it with every circumstance of our lives, as we let Him.

Jesus looked at Martha and said, "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in Me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?" That, she believed. That's really cool. Do I believe that? Do I believe that Jesus is everything I need and that there is no "Jesus AND" plan, or "God helps those who help themselves" plan? How can a dead person help himself?

Martha told Jesus she absolutely believed that He is the Christ, the Son of God. She believed

He was and is the Messiah. That part she got. But there was a surprise coming.

At that point, Martha told someone to go get Mary. Mary ran to Jesus, fell at His feet crying, and said, "Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died." This was such a tender moment as Jesus had such deep compassion for her. This blows me away. Jesus KNEW He was going to raise Lazarus from the dead. But He did not say, "What's your problem? Don't you trust Me? You should just be happy that Lazarus will be in heaven. In fact, it's kind of rude that you want him to leave paradise right now." I praise God that He who calls us to weep with those who weep also weeps with us, even though He knows the whole picture! And though He knows that "weeping may endure for the night, but joy comes in the morning," He STILL weeps with us in the night!

Jesus had Mary and Martha take Him to where Lazarus was laid in a tomb. He had been dead for 4 days. Vs. 35 is the smallest verse in the bible, and yet it has massive meaning. "Jesus wept."

Why did He weep? Scripture says... "He sympathizes with our weaknesses." He is "the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort." He is one with His people and He feels our pain personally. "In all our affliction, He is afflicted." Nowhere did He say as He said in other situations, "O foolish people, where is your faith?" As my husband says at every funeral, "Tears are NOT a sign of lack of faith. Tears are a sign that it hurts." Jesus weeps with me when I hurt.

In that moment, so many who were there, hurting and mourning Lazarus' death were saying, "Could not He who opened the eyes of the blind man also have kept this man from dying?" Again, this did not upset Jesus, it made Him hurt for them. He is so compassionate!!!

This is how I know Martha didn't get it when Jesus told her Lazarus would rise. Jesus told them to take away the stone that covered the cave, and she said, "What? He's been gone 4 days! The smell!!!!"

Jesus said, "Did I not tell you that if you believed you would see the glory of God?" I can only imagine what Mary and Martha were thinking at this moment. Were their hearts beating faster? Were they getting chills all over as Jesus prayed to His Father, "Father, I thank You that You've heard Me. I know that You ALWAYS hear Me, but these loved ones need to hear it so that they can believe You sent Me." Then Jesus said, "Lazarus, come out!"

When Jesus called for the people to move the stone away and then for Lazarus to come out... I wonder if it reminded Him of His own death and resurrection that would soon take place. Only, it wasn't a man who died because he was sick. Jesus died to heal our sickness caused by the corruption of sin. It wasn't men who rolled the stone away for Jesus. It was angels. And Jesus didn't come out with burial clothes on, needing someone else to unbind Him. His clothes were folded up and left in the tomb. Because Jesus lives, I live. Praise His name!!!

In vs. 4, Jesus 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." In vs. 40, Jesus said, "Did I not tell you that if you believed you would see the glory of God?" How did the people see the glory of God in that moment? Lazarus came out!!! He was still wrapped in all the burial clothes. Even his face was wrapped. But Jesus said, "Unbind him, and let him go." The glory of God is always good for me. I should never be afraid to see His glory. The surprises of His glory breathe life into my soul just as that moment breathed life into Lazarus.

"God's will is what we would want if we had all the facts" (William Thrasher). The fact is, God has all the facts... and the stuff He lets me wonder about is all because He doesn't want to ruin the surprise. I would bet if I asked Mary, Martha, and Lazarus if they could have gone back and had Jesus show up to heal Lazarus before he died, not one of them would say yes. The surprise was worth it... all for the glory of God. I'm looking back on their story. But Lord, please help me to trust that my story has the same hope. I may not see it, but You don't want to ruin the surprise.