

11/11/26

Do you ever wonder why God doesn't tell us what He's doing when we'd love nothing better than to know what He's doing because right now things don't make sense? I think the answer is... He doesn't want to ruin the surprise. I'm just so thankful that He's such a merciful God because sometimes I'm not very good at waiting for the surprise. 🧐 How about you?

Blessings,
Jonna

John 11:1-16
Today and tomorrow, we're gonna look at a resurrection that brought probably a fraction of the shock and awe that will come at the rapture, but it was still a lot of shock and awe to the people. It was such a great picture of the extraordinary hope we have from our God who loves us so much. I think He LOVES to surprise us with His wonder.

As I start this first half of the story, let me always remember that when things look rough, I'm definitely in the middle of the story. With the Lord, the ending is always awesome. That's why even when I grieve, I can grieve with hope.

Here's the beginning of the story…

A loved one named Lazarus of Bethany was ill… to the point that he wasn't going to get better without an intervention. His sisters loved him and they loved Jesus. In John 12, we'll read that Lazarus's sister Mary will anoint Jesus to prepare Him for His burial. I don't know if she understood what she was doing at the time, but Jesus did.

The sisters sent word to Jesus that Lazarus was sick. They said, "Lord, he whom You love is ill." Surely He would come right away and heal him, right? When Jesus heard the news, He said, "This won't lead to death. It's for the glory of God so that the Son of God may be glorified through it."

Okay… I already know what's gonna happen. Jesus is going to raise Lazarus from the dead. But

I think it's very cool that the thing that will glorify the Son of Man is absolutely what will bless people. It's such a great picture of how God's glory is always for our good. And anything that is truly good for us will always glorify God.

Well… the next two verses, 5 and 6, are confusing to me. They say, "Now Jesus LOVED Martha and her sister and Lazarus." He didn't just love Lazarus. He loved the whole family. That's cool. BUT vs. 6 says, "SO (because He loved them, when He heard that Lazarus was ill, He stayed where He was two more days." Two more days! If He loved them, why didn't He go to them immediately???

The answer to that reminds me of Brandon Lake's song, "How Good God Is." The lyrics of the chorus are, "Thank God for the anger that forced me to pray… Thank God for the silence that taught me to wait… If He spared me from breaking, and God knows I did… Then I never would've ever known how good God is." God allowed them to experience pain, yes. But He never wastes our suffering. Even when our circumstances are not good, God is able to work good through them. God allowed them to feel pain but He was also going to bless them with extreme joy.

But right now we're in the middle of the story… so… Jesus told the disciples, "Let's go back to Judea." The disciples said, "Ummm… do You remember that the Jews from there were trying to stone You to death???"

Jesus answered, "Yeppers… but aren't there 12 hours in the day? If anyone walks during the day, he doesn't stumble because he sees the light of the world. It's when someone walks in the night that he stumbles, because he has no light in him." I think Jesus is talking about something deeper than if the sun is out. I think He's saying, "I'm the light of the world. Nothing's going to happen to us because you're with Me." O Lord, that's true for me, too!

That doesn't mean we'll never suffer. Those disciples eventually gave their lives for the light of the world because the darkness hated them. But anything God allows to happen is in His plan and He works good through it. Not one of those disciples regretted their dedication to the Lord, and they're all in His presence right now, celebrating eternity with Him.
After Jesus spoke about the light, He told the disciples that Lazarus has fallen asleep and He was going to go wake him up. The disciples did not get it. (I often feel that things go over my head, too.) So Jesus said, "No guys, Lazaraus has died." Jesus also said that He was glad He wasn't there to help him recover from his illness, so that they would grow in their faith in Him. So Jesus was going to heal Lazarus, help his sisters, and grow the disciples' faith, and by all that He would be glorified. Again, I see that Jesus being glorified always means that it will be a blessing to those who love Him.
Thomas didn't get it. But he still wanted to be with Jesus. His ignorance did not crush his faith. He even said, "Okay guys, let's go with Jesus. It looks like He's walking into His death, so let's die with Him if that's what it takes to follow Him." I want to have the same attitude Thomas had. No matter what God may have me walk through, I want to be able to say, "Worth it." I want to be able to have the mindset that if I'm with Jesus, I can live in the assurance that He's with me and any sacrifice for Him is nothing compared to being with Him. That's a lot

easier said than done. I need to ask Him for help.
As I look at the Lord's timing over the last several months in my own life, I can see that there have been things where it could have been written, "Now Jesus loved Jonna, so He stayed two more days." In the waiting, it's very easy for me to question His goodness and I begin to brace myself for what will come next. But I see two very distinct things happen, and in both cases, He always proves to be faithful. I either see Him answer my prayers with the answer "yes" even if I have to wait for it to happen (not knowing that the answer IS yes), or I see Him answer with a "no, but I'm going to sustain you and strengthen you through it." No matter how He answers, at the end of the story there is joy and peace and a deeper walk with Him… even gratitude when the answer is "no". Now If I could only remember that when I'm in the middle of the story!!! 🤦‍♀️