

The Crisis at Bethany

John 11 (read verses 1-17)

As we continue “walking with Jesus” we walk with Him to a suburb of Jerusalem called Bethany. There is a crisis in Bethany.

- This was not a crisis of the **mind**. It was a real crisis. Some people imagine something is wrong, when in reality, nothing is wrong.
- This was not a **man-made** crisis. Some people bring a lot of trouble upon themselves.
- This was not a **manageable** crisis. This crisis was beyond the ability of Mary and Martha to resolve it. God would have to solve it.

This is a message of HOPE— God is bigger than what held Lazarus in the grave. He is bigger than the crisis in your life.

➡ The TELLING of the crisis (v. 3).

- They did not ASK Jesus to come. They simply believed Jesus would come if He knew what the situation was.
- They did NOT tell Jesus what to do. Psalm 37:5— *“Commit thy way unto the LORD [our responsibility]; trust also in him [not dictate to Him]; and he shall bring it to pass [in His own way; in His own time; according to His own purpose].”*
- They did NOT say to Jesus, “He who loves You is sick.” It is not our feeble love for Him, but His infinite love for us and we need.

➡ The TIMING in the crisis (v. 6). We don’t like delays. We want to get through the crisis as quickly as possible.

Jesus was about a day’s journey from Bethany (10:40). It would take one day for the messenger to get to Jesus. Jesus tarried two more days (v. 6). It took another day for Jesus to arrive at Bethany—Total four days (v. 17). Lazarus was already dead before Jesus got the message.

➡ The TARRYING in the crisis. Why did Jesus tarry? (1) The miracle would have been challenged if it occurred too quickly after Lazarus death. But to raise Lazarus after he been in the grave four days would be indisputable. (2) Jesus tarried that greater things could be done.

- Delay of glory (vs. 4, 40). We look at things view a SHORT PERSPECTIVE. Right NOW!

Look beyond your current crisis to the glory of God that will be revealed in the crisis. Look to what God is doing—not to what you are suffering.

I. The God Who Comes To Where We Are (John 11:17, 20, 28).

God comes to us. He does not leave us to ourselves!

God comes to where we are to get us to where we ought to be!

I am here today because God did not leave me to myself!

A. He comes **in His own TIME** (vs. 6, 17 cf. 2:4; 7:6, 8, 30; 8:20; 12:23; 13:1; 17:1).

1. Jesus is never in a hurry! God may NOT provide your need tomorrow, or next week, or next month!

- *“He hath made every thing beautiful in his time.”* (Eccl. 3:11).
- God’s schedule is never interrupted— God’s clock is never fast or slow. God works ON time, IN time, EVERY TIME!

2. Never interpret God’s love by outward circumstances (cf. vs. 5-6). Too often we question God’s love when He does not rush to our aid immediately. *“No man knoweth either love or hatred BY all that is BEFORE them.”* (Eccl. 9:1).

B. He comes **into our own TROUBLE**—*“God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble”* (Ps. 46:1)

When Jesus walked to Calvary, He walked right into the midst of our worst trouble!

II. The God Who Becomes What We Need. (vs. 17-27).

A. He becomes the SUFFICIENT One. He is the *“I AM...”* He is more than enough for our need. He is more than adequate!

1. There are seven

- “*I am the good Shepherd*” (John 10:11)
- “*I am the resurrection and the life*” (John 11:25)
- “*I am the way, the truth, and the life*” (John 14:6)
- “*I am the vine*” (John 15:1)

2. Martha didn't need bread at the moment. She didn't need light. She needed a resurrection!

HUMOR: A boss asked one of his employees if he believed in the resurrection. The employee said, “Well, yes sir, I do.” His boss replied, “Well, that's good because after you took off work to attend the funeral of your father, he came by work to see you.”

3. Martha was reflecting on the **past** (v. 21). Jesus is not the “I WAS...” He is the “*I AM...*” He is the God of the RIGHT NOW! He is an ever present help in time of need.
4. Martha was looking to the **future** (v. 24).
5. Martha was confident about prayer the **present** (v. 22— “... *EVEN NOW...*”).

When you can't pray, Jesus CAN!

C. He becomes the SUPPLICATING One (vs. 41-42).

➡ Notice the phrase, *“But for the people...”* (v. 41). Are you ministry conscious or are you people conscious?

1. He prayed when it seemed like they could not pray. They were not praying—They were too busy accusing (vs. 21, 32).
2. He prays when it appeared it is too late to pray (v. 39). “Lord, don’t stir up a stink now!”

III. The God That Overcomes What We Face (John 11:38-45).

A. He overcame DEATH. Lazarus was dead four days. He was “sure ‘nuff” dead. He was graveyard dead!



1. His Voice raised the dead (John 5:25—*“...the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live.”* Jesus commands death to release its victims, and death obeys.
2. If Jesus could raise Lazarus, then my problem doesn’t seem so hard!

B. He overcame DECAY—He didn’t listen to Martha’s advice.

1. The **stink** of decay—Jesus had them remove the stone to reveal the stinking essence of sin!

➡ Death stinks! When the Bible says that the unsaved are DEAD IN TRESPASSES AND SINS, we need to realize that sin stinks in the nostrils of a thrice holy God!

2. The **stanch** of decay—He reversed the decomposition process.

➡ At Christ’s call, *“death was swallowed up in victory.”* All the parts of Lazarus body begin to function again—Heart beating, blood circulating, lungs breathing, fingers, etc.

C. He overcame DETACHMENT. The detachment of the soul/spirit from the body at death.

1. While Lazarus lay dead in the grave, the real Lazarus was gone.
2. Jesus called back the soul/spirit and reunited them with the body. Lazarus' life was FULLY restored as if he never died.
 - ➡ Jesus did not raise a “spook.” I would have liked to see those Jews' wide-eyed stares as Lazarus came out of the grave.

D. He overcame DIVISION. The family of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus is no longer divided. The family is reunited (12:1-2).

SUMMATION: The main message of this miracle is: Jesus the Destroyer of death.

If you are unsaved, you are dead in trespasses and sin. There is no life in you. If you die in that spiritual condition, you will suffer “the second death” in the lake of fire forever.

The good news is, just as Jesus raised Lazarus from physical death, Jesus can raise you from spiritual death. He will come to where you are in your sin and trouble... He will become what you need—A Savior... He will overcome what you cannot—Sin and hell. Will you hear His voice calling you and come to Him?

If you are saved and in some kind of crisis—Jesus specializes in solving crisis's. If He can solve the crisis at Bethany, He can solve the crisis at your house and in your family if you call to Him. But it will be in His timing and in His way.