

This manuscript is a Summary, for a full expression of this sermon, please download the audio file.

III- Whose of First. Perfect timing

Point-Jesus was subject to the will of the Father; this incredible miracle was only possible with obedience to remain and wait. Timing is everything.

It is worth noting that the Father delaying Jesus intervention (by human standards) does not alter his care for us,

"But when Jesus heard about it he said, "Lazarus's sickness will not end in death. No, it happened for the glory of God so that the Son of God will receive glory from this." 5 So although Jesus loved Martha, Mary, and Lazarus, six he stayed where he was for the next two days. 7 Finally, he said to his disciples, "Let's go back to Judea.""- Jn 11:4–7.

"if Jesus was staying in the region of Batanea, approximately 150 kilometres to the north-east of Jerusalem. When the messenger first arrives, Jesus says, 'This sickness will not end in death'—which presupposes that as far as Jesus is concerned Lazarus was ill but still alive at the time. Only after the two-day delay does Jesus say, 'Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep'—almost as if his supernaturally acquired knowledge of Lazarus' death is the divine signal that sends him and his disciples off to Bethany. That means the four days that elapse between Lazarus' death and his resurrection (v. 17) begin just before Jesus sets out on the trip to Bethany. If Jesus were staying in the Transjordan, only one day, or at the most two, would be required for the journey. From Jewish sources, it is well known that a day's journey for a healthy person was considered to be 40 or 45 kilometres. The 150 kilometres that separate Bethany near Jerusalem from Bethany/Batanea would require the four days suggested by v. 17."- D. A. Carson,

"What Jesus has just said could be interpreted as callousness toward the Bethany family. John will have none of it: he insists that Jesus loved (on the verb, cf. notes on v. 3) Martha and her sister and Lazarus."- D. A. Carson,

"God's love for His own is not a pampering love; it is a perfecting love. The fact that He loves us, and we love Him is no guarantee that we will be sheltered from the problems and pains of life. After all, the Father loves His Son: and yet the Father permitted His beloved Son to drink the cup of sorrow and experience the shame and pain of the Cross. We must never think that love and suffering are incompatible. Certainly, they unite in Jesus Christ."- Warren W. Wiersbe

Application- That we operate to a divine plan, another reason to seek time with God, to discern his part for us in this plan.

"When we find ourselves confronted by disease, disappointment, delay, and even death, our only encouragement is the Word of God. We must live by faith and not by sight."- Warren W. Wiersbe

It is worth noting at this point that by obedience to the Fathers prompting, Jesus has by choice now put himself in a position that the actions of his enemies can be carried out,

"Thus in transparent irony, it is his quest to bring his dead friend back to life that precipitates the Sanhedrin decision against him (vv. 45ff.) and therefore his own execution"- D. A. Carson

As to why the Father instructs Jesus to wait, one might ask "When does the soul leave the body?", It may be argued that by being in the tomb for over three days, the idea of being "properly dead" has occurred, that is, there can be no equivocation over the outcome, Lazarus is brought back from the dead by Jesus, and no other explanation is possible.

"From a slightly later date there are sources attesting the rabbinic belief that the soul hovers over the body of the deceased person for the first three days, 'intending to re-enter it, but as soon as it sees its appearance change', i.e. that decomposition has set in, it departs (Leviticus Rabbah [a rabbinical commentary] 18:1 [on Lv. 15:1]; for other references cf. SB 2. 544f.). At that point death is irreversible. Though Lagrange (p. 307) doubts that this belief stretches back to the time of Jesus, it seems to be presupposed here."- D. A. Carson

Martha goes to meet Jesus, in this interaction, Jesus exclaims with his 5th "I AM" statement,

John 11:25-26 (NLT) Jesus told her, “I am the resurrection and the life. Anyone who believes in me will live, even after dying. 26 Everyone who lives in me and believes in me will never ever die.

Martha grasps the eternal significance of this state, but not the immediate application as Jesus is about to demonstrate,

"He (Jesus)took it out of a book and put it into a person, Himself. "I am the resurrection and the life"! (John 11:25) While we thank God for what the Bible teaches (and all Martha had was the Old Testament), we realize that we are saved by the Redeemer, Jesus Christ, and not by a doctrine written in a book. When we know Him by faith, we need not fear the shadow of death. When you are sick, you want a doctor and not a medical book or a formula. When you are being sued, you want a lawyer and not a law book. Likewise, when you face your last enemy, death, you want the Saviour and not a doctrine written in a book. In Jesus Christ, every doctrine is made personal (1 Cor. 1:30). When you belong to Him, you have all that you ever will need in life, death, time, or eternity!"-Warren W. Wiersbe

"When Jesus asks Martha Do you believe this?, he is not asking if she believes that he is about to raise her brother from the dead, but if her faith can go beyond quiet confidence that her brother will be resurrected at the last day to personal trust in Jesus as the resurrection and the life, the only person who can grant eternal life and promise the transformation of resurrection." -D. A. Carson

We, as believers in Jesus, can attest to the truth of his claims, he stated that he has the authority, power and inclination to give eternal life, and he proves the claim by physical demonstration.

An aside note

It's also worth noting that Martha and Mary have different respect in the community. Martha goes to discuss things with Jesus, no one follows her. The discussion takes place between her, Jesus and the disciples. Later Mark leaves the house and all who have gathered to support follow Mary. We can speculate as to why Mary's departure causes people to go with her yet Martha's does not, regardless there is a lesson to learn. Certain people garner a set of followers easier than others, and thus for those who have chosen to place Christ at the creator of our lives, we must accept

that others will look to us for leadership, if you are one of these people, lead properly!

"Jesus Wept"- Jesus has great indignation, or some translation calls it anger, we then discover that at this point he weeps.

"“Jesus wept” is the shortest and yet the deepest verse in Scripture. His was a silent weeping (the Greek word is used nowhere else in the New Testament) and not the loud lamentation of the mourners. But why did He weep at all? After all, He knew that He would raise Lazarus from the dead (John 11:11).

Our Lord’s weeping reveals the humanity of the Saviour. He has entered into all of our experiences and knew how we feel. In fact, being the perfect God-Man, Jesus experienced these things in a deeper way than we do. His tears also assure us of His sympathy; He is indeed “a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief” (Isa. 53:3). Today, He is our merciful and faithful High Priest, and we may come to the throne of grace and find all the gracious help that we need (Heb. 4:14–16).

We see in His tears the tragedy of sin but also the glory of heaven."

Warren W. Wiersbe

"Rather, the same sin and death, the same unbelief, that prompted his outrage, also generated his grief. Those who follow Jesus as his disciples today do well to learn the same tension—that grief and compassion without outrage reduce to mere sentiment, while outrage without grief hardens into self-righteous arrogance and irascibility." - D. A. Carson

We should as Jesus, develop the same heart to the world around, holding in tension the grief and compassion with the outrage at the effects of sin, this is the state of heart for those who want the King to come!

Jesus calls Lazarus by name; it is amazing to think, had Jesus not placed the name Lazarus the end of his sentence, then all who were in the tomb would have come out.

Point -It takes a community to unwrap a disciple

When Lazarus comes out of the grave, Jesus leaves the unwrapping of him to those around; we can understand that Jesus brings the sea back to life, but tasks us with unwrapping that person from the misconceptions which previous dogged them. We can contribute to showing the new life how to live it according to the glory of Jesus.

Point -Satan would prefer we just stay in the grave.

Finally, let us consider what we would have thought, had the next day we found Lazarus sitting alive, yet inside the grave! We would have wondered why a live person was hanging around with a place associated with the dead. However, how many new disciples have let themselves be “bullied” by Satan to moving back to a safe spot, to just “reside” in this world, as opposed to truly “thriving.”

Application- We worship a God of power who choose you specifically! He has a specific purpose for you, and as a community, are we willing to open ourselves to it.