

Miracles Still Happen

John 11:1-27

Good Morning

Like the religious leaders of Jesus' day, many people want the Lord to perform a super natural miracle, to prove He exists.

In the Gospels, as the Lord performed miracles, and they usually did not produce belief in people; miracles are meant to authenticate the power and identity of the miracle worker.

Even within the Old Testament, when God performed miracles for the Israelites, it did not cause them to obey Him; rather they continued to disobey the Lord even after God did the miracles.

Please open your Bibles to ***John 11***, as we talk about how the Lord still performs miracles today, even if we are unaware.

Many people try to question the miracles of Jesus and the authenticity of scripture; because like the religious leaders of Jesus' day, they do not want to believe God still does miracles.

Hebrews 2:4 God also bearing witness both with signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will. NKJV

I. When God delays.

Read ***John 11:1-6***

Here in our narrative, Jesus is summoned to the home of some of His closest friends and their brother Lazarus is terminally ill.

Jesus does the **unthinkable** and stays where He was for two full days instead of rushing to the bedside of His friend and healing him right away.

In **vs. 3**, the sisters send word to Jesus to reveal that their brother was sick; but they do not tell Jesus **how** to handle the situation.

So many times in our prayer lives, we advise the Lord on how to fix our problems and how to **answer** our prayers.

Some people say, *“Just claim the healing and it will be yours”*

When Jesus was teaching His disciples to pray; He taught them to say to the Father, *“Your will be done”*

In Laura Story’s song, ***blessings***, it says, *“We pray for blessings, we pray for peace; Comfort for family, protection while we sleep*

We pray for healing, for prosperity; we pray for Your mighty hand to ease our suffering

...And all the while, You hear each spoken need Yet love us way too much to give us lesser things

'Cause what if your blessings come through rain drops, What if Your healing comes through tears

What if a thousand sleepless nights are what it takes to know You're near.

*“What if trials of this life are Your mercies in **disguise**” (Laura Story, **Blessings**)*

When we pray, we can't always see the big picture; but God sees the beginning and the end of the situation before it happens.

Isaiah 40:13 Who is able to advise the Spirit of the LORD? Who knows enough to be his teacher or counselor? NLT

We should simply make our requests known to God, and then leave the **answer** up to Him, because He will give what is best for His children.

NLT Philippians 4:6 Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done.

Philippians 4:7 If you do this, you will experience God's peace, which is far more wonderful than the human mind can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus. NLT

Lazarus sickness was not only used by the Lord, it was actually planned by the Lord; so this sickness was not a lack of faith on Lazarus' part.

Re read ***John 11:4***

So the sisters send word to Jesus, ***“The one you love is sick”***

Jesus already knew that Lazarus was sick and He stayed two more days where He was.

So if you add up the days it took Jesus to respond, it stands to reason that Lazarus died soon after the message was sent.

There was one day before the news came to Jesus; two days He remained in the place He was; and one day to travel to Bethany.

John 11:39 says Lazarus had been dead four days when Jesus arrived there.

Some may think this was cruel for Jesus to allow Lazarus to die.

How many people get angry with God over the death of a loved one, some sickness, or something else that has happened.

We hear things like, *“If God were a God of love, He would not allow this thing to have taken place.”*

I personally struggled with that line of reasoning myself at times, so I understand; but I learned that I am not the center of the universe and that God does love me even when I don’t get it.

God answers prayers in ways I can’t comprehend and He also sees the big picture when all I see is what’s right in front of me.

The Lord said in ***Isaiah 55:9*** *My ways higher than your ways...*

II. Why did Jesus wait to go to Bethany?

Re-read ***John 11:3***

When we think about the love of God which is in Christ, we usually equate that love to the Greek word *agapao*.

Agapao is a perfect *love* which is given without the **expectation** of receiving something in return.

However, the word for *love* in *John 11:3* is actually the word *phileō*, which means to treat affectionately or brotherly love.

The Bible says Jesus *loved* Lazarus, so **why** *did Jesus delay?*

There are times when we pray and God doesn't come through in the way or in the time we expect Him to come through.

Most Christians believe God still performs miracles; but, when the healing doesn't come and the answers don't come; we cry, we pray, the tears flow.

We wonder: *does God care about me?* Yes, He does!

Jesus went to the cross and died for your sins. He's prepared a place in heaven for those who will receive Him;

In His own time and His own way, the Lord will make a **way** when there seems to be no way.

Whether you're well or whether you're sick... whether the answer comes as we expect it or not; Jesus is our sympathetic High Priest! So trust in His love and care for you today.

I want to offer a few different answers to the specific question in this case, for **why** Jesus waited two extra days to go to Lazarus.

- 1. So the people witnessing the event could be assured that Lazarus was really dead before performing the miracle.**

By the time He arrived, after waiting the 2 additional days before traveling, Lazarus had been dead for 4 full days.

His body had already started to decompose; the grave clothes were stained with body fluids from the decaying flesh.

John 11:39 Martha, the sister of him who was dead, said to Him, "Lord, by this time there is a stench, for he has been dead four days." NKJV

Two miracles happened when Jesus called Lazarus back to life; not only was Lazarus brought back to life; but, his body was healed back to normal, even though it had started to decay.

Jews believed that the soul of a dead person stayed around the dead body for up to 2 days, so Jesus wanted them to know without a doubt, Lazarus was fully dead.

Miracle Max in the movie Princess Bride, "*There is a big difference between mostly dead and all dead*"

Jesus is able to perform miracles.

Romans 4:17 God, who gives life to the dead and calls those things which do not exist as though they did NKJV

Next, Jesus waited two extra days to go to Lazarus...

2. To prove God the Father was real and that Jesus is God the Son: He is *the Resurrection and the Life.*

Without Death, there can be no **resurrection**.

The Lord healing Lazarus from his sickness, is one thing, it would prove that He is the Life,

But to raise Lazarus from the dead, shows that He is not only Life; but He is the One who provides Resurrection for those who believe in Him.

That day many of the Jews placed their faith in Jesus.

Next, Jesus waited two extra days to go to Lazarus...

3. Jesus never arrives "too late" to fulfill His purposes.

The simple act of waiting for Lazarus's death to be confirmed and his burial all add credibility that this was a miracle unlike any these people had ever seen and a work of God!

God's wisdom is marvelous and this account has so many precise details, to show its authenticity.

So Jesus Christ waited until His friend Lazarus was dead for four days so the Jews knew he was really dead and that Jesus Christ can and does easily raise the dead by command.

Remember, Lazarus was probably already dead before Jesus was told of his sickness, by the messenger; so the delay made no difference to Lazarus at all.

When the sisters were upset, thinking Jesus was unconcerned, was simply their own short sidedness.

The sisters were looking for **instant comfort**, and tell Jesus His friend (*phileō* love) is sick.

Jesus had eternal things in mind; vs. 5 says Jesus **loved** the whole family perfectly, which is *agapao* love.

The miracle Jesus performed had eternal consequences, not only for the family, but also for many who witnessed it and believed unto salvation.

Sometimes we are short sided and cannot understand why God doesn't do things in our timing, or in our way, it is because He is eternally focused and sees the big picture and we are short sided.

Jesus never arrives "too late" to fulfill His purposes.

But the sisters were not the only ones who were short-sided...

III. Short sided disciples.

Read *John 11:7-16*

Jesus tells His disciples that it is time to head back into the war zone of Judea.

They are obviously concerned because they knew the religious leadership was out to execute Jesus.

The disciples are probably thinking, "Hey Jesus, You can heal Lazarus from anywhere, you don't need to go back there."

In the *Gospel of Matthew* about a healing Jesus did.

Matthew 8:5 when Jesus had entered Capernaum, a centurion came to Him, pleading with Him, 6 saying, "Lord, my servant is lying at home paralyzed, dreadfully tormented."

Matthew 8:7 And Jesus said to him, "I will come and heal him."

Matthew 8:8 The centurion answered and said, "Lord, I am not worthy that You should come under my roof. But only speak a word, and my servant will be healed."

Matthew 8:9 For I also am a man under authority, having soldiers under me. And I say to this one, 'Go,' and he goes; and to another, 'Come,' and he comes; and to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it." NKJV

Jesus explains to His disciples there are 12 daylight hours in the day, you can't change that; **But** Jesus was basically saying...

"The Father has given Me a mission to complete." Nothing can stop Jesus from completing His mission.

Jesus never wavered from His calling or His mission; He knew what He was here to do and nothing was going to stop Him.

Here is good lesson for us; often times, we worry whether we are missing out on something, or what if we were supposed to do something else.

Our time belongs to the Lord, and what He gives us to do, is what we should be doing.

So many times we chase after other things than what God gave us to do; and neglect the ministry or call the Lord gave us to do.

Don't open doors He has closed and don't walk away from things He has called you to. **And by the way,** your life is **invincible** until He is done with you; serve God fearlessly!

Jesus is still performing miracles today.

Then Jesus explains to them, how He was glad the Father had designed it that Jesus would not be there when Lazarus died.

Re-read *John 10:15*

The story that began with grief would end in **belief**.

If Jesus would have been there and healed Lazarus earlier, not nearly as many people would have come to believe in Jesus.

The fact that these men came into town after the body was already decaying helped them to grow in their faith as well.

In *vs. 16*, Thomas says, “*Okay Jesus, let's get it over with and go and die as well*”

Basically, Thomas is saying, “*If Jesus is going to be killed by the religious leaders then I will die with Him!*”

IV. The ultimate question.

Read *John 11:17-27*

Verse 20 says that Martha went out as soon as she heard the Lord had arrived, but Mary stayed at the house.

This seems to fit these sisters personality, as we learned in the *Gospel of Luke*.

Luke 10 tells the story of Martha being distracted with much serving, while Mary sat at Jesus' feet learning.

Luke 10:41 And Jesus answered and said to her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things.

Luke 10:42 But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her." NKJV

Here Martha again is showing her type "A" personality by running out to meet Jesus.

Notice what she says to Jesus, "*If you had been here, Lazarus would be alive*"

Luke 10:41-42 is not an **accusation** against Jesus' power; instead this is a statement of faith, in who Jesus is.

Notice she says, whatever you ask the Father, He will grant it to you, that is faith.

Martha may not have all the knowledge she will have after Christ rising from the dead, but she believes in Him, anyway!

The same is true for us today, we do not have to have all things figured out; we just need to have Faith in who Jesus says He is.

Then, Jesus assures Martha that her brother will rise again, and she agrees that at the last resurrection, he will live.

You see, the Pharisees believed in the resurrection of the righteous dead, but the Sadducees did not.

Martha agreed with the Jewish belief in the resurrection; but Jesus wants her to understand something about Him.

Jesus wants to take her from a Theological truth to a personal truth for those who trust in Jesus for salvation.

Re read *John 10:25-26*

So with the claim of Jesus being the resurrection, Jesus said, *“Whoever believes in me, even if he dies, will live again”*.

With the claim of Jesus being the life, Jesus said, *“Whoever is alive now and believes in Me shall never die”*.

Understand Christian, your body may fall asleep; but you are an eternal being. When a Christian passes away, they are simply changing their address from earth to heaven.

This section ends with the most vital question for everyone for all eternity. *John 11:26 Do you believe this?" NKJV*

Our salvation is based on a **personal** belief in the risen Christ.

V. Practical Application

So many Christians fail to recognize that Jesus still performs miracles, everyday, all around us.

The flip side of that coin, are those people who manipulate things and try to turn God into a personal vending machine.

Hebrews 13:8 Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

Hebrews 13:9 Do not be carried about with various and strange doctrines. NKJV

We need to remember however what Jesus said in ***John 15***, “***Without me you cannot do anything***” That means anything with spiritual significance, has to be done in the power of Jesus.

Our first and foremost need is to realize we need the power of the Holy Spirit working in our lives.

God still performs miracles and one of the greatest proofs to non-believers of God’s miracles, are the changed lives of His followers. I am living proof that miracles still happen.

The Bible is filled with these examples of how the Lord works miracles, using ordinary people to change the course of history.

One of the Lord’s gifts to His people is the awesome privilege of being used by Him, as He performs miracles and uses us.

Acts 4:13 when they (religious leaders) saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marveled. And they realized that they had been with Jesus.

Think about some of the people the Lord used for miracles...

There was Abraham and Sarah had Isaac in their old age.

Joseph was sold into slavery as a teen, became a world leader.

Moses, a murderer who got ahead of God, freed a nation.

Rahab, a prostitute, helped Israel defeat Jericho.

The misfit Apostles changed the whole world with the Gospel.

And on and on it goes.

Scott Calvin wrote an article and listed some of the characteristics of the people God uses to do the unexpected.

Courage, willingness, teach-ability, and a deep sense of purpose.

He said, *“Our daily interactions with God need to invigorate and renew that vision so that we can awaken and live with a deep sense of purpose.”* (Scott Calvin)

The Lord still performs miracles that go against the laws of nature; He still heals people, and He still confounds the wisdom of men...

But often times, we fail to see Him working and there are also times we credit people for the Lord’s miracles.

The question for us is, *“Do we want to serve the Lord and be used by Him, as He uses us to perform miracles?”*

Sometimes, the Lord performs miracles by providing things to us; in order for us to turn around and give them away, to see His will be done.

Isaiah 6:8, I heard the voice of the Lord, saying: "Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?" Then I said, "Here am I! Send me." NKJV

Isaiah answered God's call and question, as he did not hesitate.

What created this desire within the heart of Isaiah? Isaiah had a real experience in the presence of God.

In the presence of God's holiness, Isaiah recognized his own sinfulness and he needed a touch from God's cleansing fire.

Isaiah also had God's heart to reach the nations.

I said earlier that miracles are supposed to authenticate the power and identity of the miracle worker.

God wants the world to know His great love for people; how salvation comes through Jesus alone and not by any human efforts.

So the Lord allows us to play apart in His plan to let the whole world know...

For us personally, it is better to simply take God at His Word, than to try and see 1,000 miracles because as Jesus said in...

John 20:29 Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed." NKJV

And *Hebrews 11:6* says, *without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. NKJV*

Wait on the Lord. Listen to the Lord and trust the Lord. Then when He tells you to get involved, to give, or to help with one of His projects....

You will be blessed because of your obedience of He will allow you to play a role in His furtherance of the Gospel here on earth