

John 11:1-44

Resurrecting Brokenness, Hope In The Midst of Doubt

Image Church // Image Church #4

Intro

Ashley Gives a tribute to the Mothers...

Ashley Prays:

BTW if you're a woman: We have *Coffee and Conversations* THIS Friday, May 13th at 7pm... Bring your own appetizer, they will have the coffee! *Good opportunity to invite a friend!!*

Alright, well this morning we're continuing our series called **Follow Me**, where we're going to be looking at who Jesus is and why He's worth following...

If you have your Bible go ahead and turn to John Chapter 11

Here's the thing that I want you to understand... Believing in Jesus doesn't mean that you don't have doubts or questions...

See, doubt is what happens when faith encounters the real world...

**When what we believe comes in direct contact with situations or experiences that might seem to go against the fundamental foundations that our faith is rooted in.

And **that's ok!** In fact, I would actually say that's healthy...

See, historically what's happened is that Christianity has been placed on this continuum that goes like this:

- Atheist Skeptic Seeker Believer mature believer

And as you move along the spectrum your questions and doubts become less and less, and then all the sudden when you hit **mature believer** status your questions and doubts completely disappear, and for the rest of your life you live in perfect trusting faith!¹

But that's just not how it works!

- *Honestly for an "achiever" like me, I wish it was!! ... But it doesn't!*

The goal isn't to be free of doubts and questions, the goal is to have strong faith that endures through doubts and questions.

We never want to find ourselves in a place where Christianity is left unquestioned, untested, and where things that are difficult to believe are avoided all together.

What can happen when we do that, is that we end up with a religion that's completely **cultural**, and at that point it becomes **superficial**.

We just believe because our parents told us to, and **not** because we understand the **implications** of where our beliefs rest and why they rest there.

True faith doesn't mean you're completely absent of doubts.

Now, as you continue in your faith, the nature of your doubts may change, they might manifest in different ways, but they certainly don't disappear.

I want to read you a quote from a brilliant Christian apologist, who is also the author of *The Chronicles of Narnia*, his name is: **CS Lewis...**

- **CS Lewis** has an incredible story, he was an atheist who converted to Christianity, and then spent the rest of his life arguing for Christianity...

¹ Lucas

But I want to share with you a piece of something he after his wife tragically died of cancer *he says*:

“[I can’t understand why God is always there when things are going well...] But go to Him when your need is desperate, when all other help is vain, and what do you find? A door slammed in your face, and a sound of bolting and double bolting on the inside. After that, silence... The longer you wait, the more emphatic the silence will become... **Why is God so present a commander in our time of prosperity and so very absent a help in times of trouble?**”²

That’s not a typical CS Lewis Quote! By God’s grace, **CS Lewis** made it through this, and ultimately his faith was strengthened by it.

But if we’re honest, many of us either have felt this, will feel this or we’re feeling this way right now...

For many of you, your faith is being called into question somewhere right now... *Maybe it’s that:*

- All your friends are getting married right now, but you aren’t.
- Maybe your struggle with infertility...
- Maybe your struggle with loneliness...
- Maybe you’re having to live paycheck to paycheck...
- Maybe you lost your job
- Maybe you have a son or daughter who strayed away from the faith....
- Maybe you have affected by a tragic divorce
- Maybe you're struggling with your health...

I want to show you that God hasn’t shut the door on our face, *He’s actually opened up His heart...*

What we’re going to be looking at this morning is going to give us hope and it’s going to help us have strong faith in the midst of doubts,

as we look at the implications of who Jesus is and what He came to accomplish...

One thing before we jump in- *I know there may be some of you here and you’re not in a place where you’re struggling with doubts, your faith isn’t being called into question...*

- *That’s awesome, but chances are there’s someone around you who is- I want you to soak this in so that you can share it...*
- *Doubt and brokenness are two of the greatest bridges to Jesus.*

John 11:1-45

Now a man was sick, Lazarus from Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. **2** Mary was the one who anointed the Lord with perfume and wiped his feet with her hair, and it was her brother Lazarus who was sick. **3** So the sisters sent a message to him: “Lord, the one you love is sick.”

4 When Jesus heard it, he said, “**This sickness will not end in death but is for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it.**” **5** Now Jesus loved Martha, her sister, and Lazarus. **6 So when he heard that he was sick, he stayed two more days in the place where he was.** **7** Then after that, he said to the disciples, “**Let’s go to Judea again.**”

Verse 11

11 He said this, and then he told them, “**Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I’m on my way to wake him up.**” **12** Then the disciples said to him, “Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will get well.” **13** Jesus, however, was speaking about his death, but they thought he was speaking about natural sleep. **14** So Jesus then told them plainly, “**Lazarus has died.**”

Let me stop right here for just a minute, and I want to give you the first thing that you need to understand that’s going to set the stage for where we’re going this morning...

We live in a world that’s been impacted by sin

² C. S. Lewis, *A Grief Observed* (San Francisco, CA: Harper Collins, 1961), 17.

We live in a broken world and the greatest evidence of the broken state that we live in is **death**- it is the greatest loss, it is the greatest tragedy- and it's what happened here with Lazarus...

Death came as a result of sin...

Let me take you back to the garden in the beginning for just a second to show you how this fits together... When God created the world and everything in it, it was perfectly good...

It was a world where there was **perfect harmony** between **creation** and the **Creator**... One where **Adam** and **Eve**- the first humans walked with God in an unbroken relationship absent of sin...

And all of creation was even synced up in perfect harmony:

- Adam and Eve had the perfect marriage... *Imagine that!*
- There was no anxiety, no depression, no insecurity... *Adam and Eve walked around necked- talk about confidence... (yeah I said necked).*
- The animals didn't attack them...
- There was no sickness, there was hurt, there was no pain, **there was no death**...

Everything was perfectly good and glorious existing in perfect harmony together...

And the second Adam and Eve sinned, **it changed everything** the harmonious relationship between God and creation was **severed**... The **perfect goodness** of creation no longer existed, and so creation began to **unravel**...

The aftermath of sin impacts 4 relationships:³

- Broken relationship between man and God
- Broken relationship between man and man
- Broken relationship between man and creation
- Broken relationship between man and self

Sin's impact was pervasive, polluting and breaking apart that which was good...

***Which means this**... that every bad thing that you see, every bad thing that we experience, every sickness, every natural disaster, every death...

- The loneliness you feel, the shame that you feel, the broken marriage, the health issues, the infertility, even things like losing your job, wayward children, emotional trauma...

All of it is the result of the brokenness that sin caused when it entered the world... Distorting that which was perfect and good...

- And *no a valley is not CFA being closed on Sunday or Starbucks no longer serving a PSL doesn't count*...

And when we come face to face with this brokenness in a real way we begin to experience doubts and our faith gets called into question...

- It's never the mountain tops, it's always the valleys that bring us face to face with what we really believe...

And so, here in **John 11** Lazarus' sickness and death is evidence of the broken and fallen state of humanity...

And yet, **we're going to watch how God uses the greatest evidence of brokenness to bring about our greatest source of hope**... Hope that we can hold onto in the midst of our disappointments and doubts...

*Let's keep reading, look at **verse 17***

17 When Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb **four days**.

Verse 20

20 As soon as Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went to meet him, but Mary remained seated in the house.

21 Then **Martha** said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother wouldn't have died. **22** Yet even now I know that whatever you ask

³ Theologian Bruce Ashford

from God, God will give you.” 23 “Your brother will rise again,” Jesus told her. 24 Martha said to him, “I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day.” 25 Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me, even if he dies, will live. 26 Everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?” 27 “Yes, Lord,” she told him, “I believe you are the Messiah, the Son of God, who comes into the world.” 28 Having said this, she went back and called her sister Mary, saying in private, “The Teacher is here and is calling for you.” 29 As soon as Mary heard this, she got up quickly and went to him.

Verse 32

32 As soon as Mary came to where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet and told him, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died!”

33 When Jesus saw her crying, and the Jews who had come with her crying, he was deeply moved in his spirit and troubled. 34 “Where have you put him?” he asked.

“Lord,” they told him, “come and see.”

35 Jesus wept.

This is powerful... *Jesus weeps*... But the question is *why* does he weep? It's not because of what you might think...

It's *not* because He's sad because Lazarus died- He knows what's about to happen...

Then why is He weeping?!?

Well, there's a repeated phrase that shows us *why* Jesus is weeping, and it's the phrase *deeply moved*...

It literally means: *the snorting of horses*... *You ever heard a horse snort?*

- Applied to human beings, it means anger, outrage or emotional indignation.

So, what is Jesus angry and outraged about??

Jesus was angry at the *brokenness of this world*, angry at *sin*, angry at *sickness* and *death* that's ravaging mankind, wreaking havoc and generating so much sorrow- He didn't create us for this!

*What generated His outrage also generated his grief and it led Him to tears...*⁴

Listen, and some of you need to hear this today, what this means is that *God's not OK with the brokenness that you live in!*

- That's why Jesus came, it's why Jesus was moved to tears over the destruction that sins caused...

And even though it's our fault and not His, He didn't leave us to be *ravaged by sin* and the effects of sin, He didn't wipe His hands and say *Oh well*... He didn't stay distant from us and say you figure out how to fix this...

The perfect Son of God came to sinful humanity, He entered into our brokenness, and He had compassion on us, so much so it moved Him to tears... Some of yall need to see that, you need to feel that!!

BTW: Church it would do well for us to lean into this and learn from how Jesus engages here in the midst of tragedy...

- Jesus didn't give a theological answer here... He didn't tell them to trust God... *Some ppl have the worst timing... I don't want to hear it!*
- Jesus had grief, compassion and outrage here and it came out through His tears...
 - We see Jesus' humanity here and it reminds us that God made us as emotional beings, and we need to own that emotion... We need to sit in that emotion...

⁴ Thoughts and some wording in this section is credited to Carson, D. A. (1991). The Gospel according to John (p. 416).

- ***If you're the one afflicted:*** I'm mad this happened and I'm grieving the reality of it...
- ***If you're walking with someone...*** Learn how to step into the hurt and pain and be angry with them and grieve with them...

****There's something else here...*** There's another reason why Jesus is outraged and grieving... It was the ***lack of faith and belief*** of the people around Him...

They are missing the reality of ***WHO*** Jesus is and what He came to do...

- *This is where some of you are this morning...*

2 times Jesus is questioned, *Lord if you would have been here this wouldn't have happened... The people also questioned Him- if He can heal blind ppl couldn't he have healed this sick man?!?*

I know that many of you may have asked something similar before...

- *I ask this all the time when it comes to my kids...*

Where were you God?? If you would have shown up then I wouldn't be hurting, I wouldn't be in pain, I wouldn't be suffering, I wouldn't be walking through this... And we begin to doubt the goodness of God, for some they begin to doubt the existence of God...

For some of you, you're there right now or you know someone there right now- their suffering is causing them to call God into question... There's confusion, there is frustration, there is hurt, you feel disoriented...

BTW, I want you to notice that Jesus never confronts their doubt... ***What He's about to do is point to something that will help us endure in the midst of our doubts...***

He's going to show them and show us that ***even when we can't see God's hand we can still trust His heart...***

Remember back in **verse 6** When Jesus found out Lazarus was sick He stayed where He was for 2 more days...

Why? *Seems like a jerk move, but we know Jesus isn't a jerk...*

Well, Jesus told us why He did this in **verse 4:** ***This sickness will not end in death but is for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it.***

Well, Jesus is about to work through this specific situation to point to an incredible reality... And in it we're ***going to get a glimpse into God's plan for this lost and broken world that we live in...***

Look at verse 38...

Verse 38 Then Jesus, ***deeply moved*** again, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone was lying against it. **39** ***"Remove the stone,"*** Jesus said. Martha, the dead man's sister, told him, ***"Lord, there is already a stench because he has been dead four days."***

- ***KJV says stinketh here... no lie... for those of you KJV fans!***
- ***Also, again the doubt- Lord He's been dead for 4 days and He stinks. Do we really want to do this?!?***

40 Jesus said to her, ***"Didn't I tell you that if you believed you would see the glory of God?"*** **41** So they removed the stone. Then Jesus raised his eyes and said, ***"Father, I thank you that you heard me.*** **42** ***I know that you always hear me, but because of the crowd standing here I said this, so that they may believe you sent me."*** **43** After he said this, he shouted with a loud voice, ***"Lazarus, come out!"*** **44** The dead man came out bound hand and foot with linen strips and with his face wrapped in a cloth. Jesus said to them, ***"Unwrap him and let him go."***

After being filled with emotion over the broken reality of this world, standing in the midst of doubters... Jesus would stand toe-to-toe with death and resurrect Lazarus!

- In doing that He would show off His **power** and His **purpose**...

In the resurrection of Lazarus Jesus would paint a picture of the reversal of death that would ultimately come through what He was about to do!

Not long after this, there would be another time when Jesus would weep, and it would be in the **Garden of Gethsemane** before He would stand toe-to-toe with death once and for all...

See, Lazarus was a **foreshadow of what** was about to come for Jesus... *The resurrection of Lazarus was the beginning of Jesus' funeral procession...*⁵

Where Jesus would give his perfect life in our place on the cross taking on our sin, and the sin of the world... And in doing that, Jesus would become our **perfection** in His life, and take on our **punishment** in His death...

- He would live the life we were supposed to live but never could, and then He would die the death that was meant for us.

And He wouldn't stay dead, He would beat death through the resurrection giving us the opportunity to have **new life in Him**...

What you have to see is that Jesus came to deal with the root cause of all our brokenness, sin...

But this isn't the end, it's the beginning... **It's the start of making all things new**... He will return and He will finish what He started by reestablishing everything as He had created it to be...

A place where there is no more hurt, no more pain, no more tears, no more shame, no more loneliness.. There will be no more brokenness... And we get to be part of this through the finished work of Jesus!!!

So, here's the deal: What do you do? ... For those of you in the midst of doubt, or for those of you that leave here and you encounter brokenness in your own life or in the lives of others...

- Tragedy strikes, sickness happens, you are in a place of despair because of unfair circumstances, there is hurt, there is pain, there is loneliness, there is shame, there is heartbreak that hits heavy...

And God's called into question... You have doubts...

I want you to remember Jesus' words: "I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me, even if he dies, will live. 26 Everyone who lives and believes in me will never die.

Jesus **lifts our eyes past what's temporary to that which is eternal**...

So, when you doubt God in your pain/brokenness... When you're wrestling with faith...

- Look back at the cross: Jesus entered your pain...
- Look forward to what it promises... this is not all there is...

And know that God will see you through to the end... He will give you what you need... Look to Him, you are not alone, God has not left you or forgotten about you...

In the same way that God was working in the midst of this situation with Lazarus, He's working in the midst of your situation... Here's where we have to get to...

Romans 8:28

- Your glory and my good, and my good may not be what I want, but it is what you want for me...

⁵ JD Greear, *Disappointment*; 9/16/2012.

Conclusion [VAMP]

There was a man named **Horatio G. Spafford**: A successful lawyer and businessman in Chicago with a lovely family - a wife, Anna, and five children.

Their young son died with pneumonia in 1871, and in that same year, much of their business was lost in the great Chicago fire.

Business came back and started doing well. On Nov. 21, 1873, the French ocean liner was crossing the Atlantic from the U.S. to Europe with 313 passengers on board. Among the passengers were Mrs. Spafford and their four daughters. Although Mr. Spafford had planned to go with his family, he found it necessary to stay in Chicago to help solve an unexpected business problem.

Wife was saved, sent a telegram back, saved alone...

Mr. Spafford booked passage on the next available ship and left to join his grieving wife. With the ship about four days out, the captain called Spafford to his cabin and told him they were over the place where his children went down.

Spafford wrote "It Is Well With My Soul" that goes like this:

*"When peace like a river attendeth my way,
When sorrows like sea billows roll,
Whatever my lot, Thou hast taught me to say,
It is well, it is well with my soul.*

Chorus:

*It is well with my soul,
It is well, it is well with my soul"*

Horatio is able to say that it is well with his soul because he understands the hope of the one He has entrusted his soul to!! It is only when you understand the weight of what Jesus has done for you, that you have this kind of hope that allows you not only to

endure but to worship as you long for the restoration promised through Christ that was proved in his resurrection!

Appeal to Believer...

Appeal to non-believer...

Pray...