
Last Song: "I Speak Jesus"

Prayer: Matthew

Turn in your Bibles to John 11.

You've been there. You've prayed and prayed and prayed and what you prayed for just isn't coming to pass. It's not happening. I was 17 years old, a senior in high school, and I was praying with everything I had that the Lord will heal my grandfather who was battling colon cancer. I was very, very close to my grandfather. We lived right beside of my grandparents and I was at their home almost every day. The influence he had on my life cannot be overstated.

So, I prayed, I cried, I begged the Lord to heal grandpa, but He didn't. He died. He was 66 years old. (That's just 12 years older than I am right now.) I couldn't believe it. I just knew the Lord was going to grant my request, but then He didn't. I was devastated.

Have you been there? I'm bet you have! You prayed and prayed and prayed and it didn't come to pass. Mary and Martha know all about this. Mary and Martha were two sisters who lived 2,000 years ago in the days of Jesus.



They were grief-stricken because of the death of their brother. They had hoped Jesus would heal their brother, but He didn't. He died...and salt in the wound was the fact that Jesus didn't even show up on time. I want to point us back to something Pastor Dale taught us last week. Look at verses 20 and 21 with me.

John 11:20-21

²⁰ So when Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, but Mary remained seated in the house. ²¹ Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.

"Mary remained seated in the house." Mary and Martha both heard that Jesus was coming...Martha went, Mary didn't. Mary remained seated in the house. Why? As you are thinking...let me remind you of the personality of these two sisters... As you are turning...they say: "A picture is worth a thousand words."



That's Mary listening at the feet of Jesus, and there's Martha working. Doctor Luke recorded this scene in Luke 10.

Luke 10:38-42

³⁸ Now as they went on their way, Jesus^[d] entered a village. And a woman named Martha welcomed him into her house. ³⁹ And she had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to his teaching. ⁴⁰ But Martha was distracted with much serving. And she went up to him and said, "Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Tell her then to help me." ⁴¹ But the Lord answered her, "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things,⁴² but one thing is necessary.^[e] Mary has chosen the good portion, which will not be taken away from her."

Martha was the "Do-er," Mary was the "BE-er." Sometimes we don't need to DO...we just need to BE before the Lord. Problem is: by nature: I'm a "Do-er"...I would have been complaining too. I can tend to be "anxious and troubled about many things." Mary, on the other hand, just basked in the presence of Jesus. This is the same Mary who will anoint Jesus with a pound of expensive perfume, costing a year's salary right before Jesus' death. But, for now she's seated in the house and she won't come out to see Jesus.

This morning we continue in **John 11, verse 28** and we'll pick up where Pastor Dale left off last week. Now remember what's already happened: Jesus is talking to Martha who has met Jesus just outside of her hometown, the village of Bethany. She has acknowledged that she believes Jesus is the Messiah...and she also acknowledged that she believes Jesus could have healed her brother, **but he didn't**. Now Jesus makes a request of Martha... "Go get Mary."

John 11:28-29

²⁸ When she had said this, she went and called her sister Mary, saying in private, "The Teacher is here and is calling for you." ²⁹ And when she heard it, she rose quickly and went to him.

Martha does as Jesus instructed. She goes to their home and she goes to Mary privately, (and I believe she goes to her privately because she knows very well that Jesus is in danger...remember the last time Jesus was in the area, the Pharisees were looking to kill Him...so, she's trying to keep

this on the “down-low.”) She says: “Mary, Jesus wants to see you.” Verse 29 says, “...she rose quickly and went to him...”

Now, I asked you earlier to be thinking about why Mary had stayed seated... Why hadn't Mary come when Jesus arrived originally? Church, I'll tell you: the Bible doesn't tell us why, and I don't want to over-exegete the passage...but, can I tell you what I believe...I believe Mary was frustrated. I believe she had stayed seated in the house because she didn't want to see Jesus because of her disappointment. I believe Mary remembered how she had waited beside of her sick brother...



with great expectancy that Jesus would come and heal him, but then He didn't. So, I believe Mary was upset with Jesus. In my mind, perhaps Mary's equation didn't add up. The equation: You love Jesus + you worship Jesus = everything's supposed to work out, right? Problem is: Jesus doesn't go by our math...because it's not His equation, it's ours.

Church, often Jesus' love for us is **not a pampering love**...instead, it's a love that molds us into His image...and the molding is hard! As followers of Jesus, we know that we live in a sin-sick, broken world and pain and suffering comes to us all. This isn't heaven. Therefore, followers of Jesus are not sheltered from trouble. Think about it. Jesus was not sheltered from trouble by His Father. God allowed His Son to be, as the prophet Isaiah wrote it:

Isaiah 53:3

³He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

Jesus suffered the shame and pain of the cross. We must never think love and suffering are incompatible...they come together perfectly in Jesus and was part of His Father's plan...and God's plan is best...even when we don't understand it. **Watch verse 30, Jesus is still outside of town...**

John 11:30-32

³⁰Now Jesus had not yet come into the village, but was still in the place where Martha had met him. ³¹When the Jews who were with her in the house, consoling her, saw Mary rise quickly and go out, they followed her, supposing that she was going to the tomb to weep there. ³²Now when Mary came to where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet, saying to him, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.”

See the pain...Mary sees Jesus and then she just collapses at His feet... If you look back at verse 21 at what Martha said...Mary said the exact same thing as her sister...but, the difference is...Mary is once again at the feet of Jesus...but this time, not worshipping, instead she's collapsed in absolute gut-wrenching anguish...collapsed weeping at the feet of Jesus. I don't know what Mary was

thinking...but, I know what I would have been thinking: you love us Jesus...you have healed all kinds of people. You not only didn't heal Lazarus... YOU DIDN'T EVEN COME!!! You didn't even come!!

Jesus, you healed the lame...you healed the blind...healed lepers...**all strangers**...but, we have housed you and cared for you and all your apostles for the last 2 ½ years...and you wouldn't even come when we asked you to come! I DON'T UNDERSTAND!!! Jesus sees this...

John 11:33

³³ When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come with her also weeping, he was deeply moved^[e] in his spirit and greatly troubled.

Church, do you want to see that Jesus is human...there it is. He's watching all of this and HE WAS DEEPLY MOVED in His spirit, (that's His soul), and He's GREATLY TROUBLED. The Greek word for GREATLY TROUBLED is **tarassō**.

Coupling tarasso with the phrase: "deeply moved," makes the emotion of this verse the most intense for Jesus that we've seen to this point in His life. That phrase "deeply moved" means: "indignant" and indignant means: "intense suffering to the point of an emotional outburst of anger"...it can literally be translated: "to snort with anger." Can you try to imagine this scene?

Mary's on the ground at Jesus' feet and He's seeing all of this...and all the people wailing and crying causes him to shudder...to literally shake with emotion...the emotion of anger. What's angry at! Death! Death was to have never been felt by the human soul. Adam and Eve were placed on this earth with the capacity to live forever. But, sin brought death into the world...disease, decay, destruction! Jesus is therefore, anguished to His soul at this scene before Him...

Not only does He feel the pain of the two sisters, whom He loves so much...He feels a pain that is literally cosmic...transcendent...beyond time itself. He sees what sin has done to His world! He sees the reality of what death has done to this family and this community...but, I'm convinced He saw more than that... He saw through time to every death that would ever come...He saw your pain and my pain...saw the pain of separation caused by death.

He saw your pain at your mother's funeral, at your father's grave...at your grandma's funeral. Yes, 2000 years ago outside of Bethany...I believe Jesus in His omniscience saw all the way through time to you and to me and to our pain. He knows your devastation! He felt it all and that's verse 35:

John 11:35

³⁵ Jesus wept.

That's the shortest verse in the Bible, but perhaps is one of the most profound. Just two words: "Jesus wept." That describes His humanity quite succinctly. Now, to be clear, the word "wept," isn't the word for weeping and sobbing that's "quiet and muffled"...the word used there means: "a sudden outburst of open crying and anguish"...it's something that someone can no longer hold in.

After all, this is the "man of sorrows acquainted with grief," as the prophet Isaiah said. Isaiah also said, "...in all their affliction, He was afflicted." Church, this is why He is our faithful High Priest who has in all ways suffered just like us! He's in anguish seeing Mary crumpled at His feet and He says... "Take me to where you have buried him," and so, off they go...and along the way...it seems the crowd who is following, begins chattering...and we see their reaction to Jesus' arrival...

John 11:36-37

³⁶ So the Jews said, "See how he loved him!" ³⁷ But some of them said, "Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man also have kept this man from dying?"

Hey brothers and sisters, people will always have comments about what you do...good and bad...and they did with Jesus. Some said positive things... "Oh how He loved Lazarus." But others said, "Come on...he healed the blind...couldn't He have gotten here to heal this man, a man He cared about so much!" You know Jesus never responds to these comments. And I believe that's a good lesson for us. We respond to WAY too many things...making mountains out of mole hills. You have to pick your battles. Be wise. You can't make everything a fight. Jesus didn't. Well, He arrives to the tomb...

John 11:38-39

³⁸ Then Jesus, deeply moved again, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone lay against it. ³⁹ Jesus said, "Take away the stone." Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, "Lord, by this time there will be an odor, for he has been dead four days."

Martha...always the thinker...always the one who has everything planned out...says... "Lord, you know he's been in the grave four days...you know he's decaying and it's going to smell bad, Lord." (BTW: The smell comes because they couldn't embalm bodies like we do.) Jesus speaks to Martha:

John 11:40

⁴⁰ Jesus said to her, "Did I not tell you that if you believed you would see the glory of God?"

Church, can you try to imagine the excitement Jesus was feeling? I believe Jesus was about to burst...He's chomping at the bit. He's going to speak and make everything better. You know: "I SPEAK JESUS." Jesus is going to speak into the darkness of death. He says, "MARTHA, this is what your faith is going to allow you to see...this is why I told you...if you'll just believe you'll see the glory of God..." "So, get ready sister...I'm getting ready to blow your mind."

Now think for a moment...if you're Martha...what's going through your mind? Yes, she believes Jesus is the Messiah. She stated as much. Yes, she believes her brother will rise from the dead at the final resurrection...(the Jews believed in resurrection of the body)...but, could she have possibly imagined that Jesus could do anything for her brother now... It's been 4 DAYS! It's too late!

It's too late. Could it be that Martha's mind was on the corpse not the Christ...not Jesus. All she could see in front of her was the tomb. And maybe that's you today. Your situation looks impossible. There seems to be no hope. No chance. All you can feel is defeat and anguish. Well, take heart dear friend, the "Resurrection and the Life" is here!

Maybe today I could encourage you to get your eyes off the corpse and onto Christ. Maybe you sense Him speaking to you this morning. Jesus is saying, "Trust me...believe in me." No, I'm not saying Jesus is going to perform some sort of miracle for you today... For instance, we've all had loved ones to die and they're not coming back in this life. But, this is not heaven!

You see, we need to be reminded that might live to be 100 years old, if we're extremely blessed...but what is that compared to eternity? Nothing. Yet, we get fixated on the here and now...this life is the corpse...heaven is Christ. Scripture says: "Set your heart on things above, not the things of this world." This life is a corpse compared to the life to come, with the One who is THE LIFE.

Some of you here today are perhaps staring at tomb and it's causing you to doubt the goodness of Jesus. To doubt whether He cares. Don't give in to that. You know what we need to do? We need to live in the **expectancy of faith**. Can you do that today? You say, "What does that mean" It means

you throw caution to the wind and all the questions and all the doubts of your current situation and just leave that at the tomb and look to Jesus, not the corpse.

Turn with me in your Bibles to Philippians 4. I'll say this again...I get it...your situation today may look impossible...it may seem hopeless, but I want to encourage you on how to live without anxiety, with an **expectancy of faith**:

Philippians 4:4-9

⁴ Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. ⁵ Let your reasonableness^[d] be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; ⁶ do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. ⁸ Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. ⁹ What you have learned^[e] and received and heard and seen in me—practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.

Jesus is the Prince of Peace and He wants to give you peace, but you have to look to Him...not the corpse. You've got to set your mind to think on Him and His ways...and be thankful and then His peace that passes all understanding will come...His spirit will bear witness with your spirit in peace.

Well, it's time...they're rolling the stone away from the cave... (stones were used to keep out the animals and grave robbers).

John 11:41-42

⁴¹ So they took away the stone. And Jesus lifted up his eyes and said, "Father, I thank you that you have heard me. ⁴² I knew that you always hear me, but I said this on account of the people standing around, that they may believe that you sent me."

Jesus has now turned His attention to the crowd who is watching. There are perhaps many in the crowd, if not the majority who do not believe in Him (they're lost in their sins) and He's praying out loud so that they could know and understand who He was praying to and to whom the glory for that which is about to happen should be attributed. Remember, the people in Bethany live only 2 miles from Jerusalem; and so, are very acquainted with what the Pharisees have been saying about Jesus. They know their religious leaders are saying that Jesus does His miracles by way of the Devil, and this is why Jesus said, "Father, I want these people to know that I came from you!" Watch verse 43:

John 11:43

⁴³ When he had said these things, he cried out with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out."

Jesus CRIED OUT with a loud voice! That's a cry that's at the top of your lungs/voice! And church, this cry is "cry" that echoes through all time and is cry of command...a command that had such power that life returned to a man's dead, decaying, decomposing body.

He said: "Lazarus, come out!" One puritan preacher said that it was good that Jesus said, "Lazarus" before He said "Come out," otherwise all the dead of ages past would have risen at that moment. That's arguable, but I get the sentiment...this is the Way, the Truth and the Life, speaking into time and space and with a "qualifier," "Lazarus" that may very well have been the reason He said it that way! For now, it's just one man rising! Eventually, it's His entire church at the Rapture! Verse 44...

John 11:44

44 The man who had died came out, his hands and feet bound with linen strips, and his face wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Unbind him, and let him go."

Can you imagine that scene? Lazarus walking out of that dark grave? Now don't think mummy. The Jews didn't wrap the bodies like Egyptians. Lazarus, (and so will Jesus in about a week and a half), were buried, wrapped loosely with linen cloth and spices, myrrh and aloes...so, he could walk. Jesus said to the ones, (likely who had rolled the stone away), "unbind him, and let him go."

You know, I think about those who did those tasks...rolled the stone away...unbound Lazarus...**that's what we're to do**. This is really a picture of salvation. The dead soul lies in the grave of unbelief and we're the Lord's ambassadors...and no, we don't do the saving...but, we're His hands and His feet to roll away the stone that hides the darkness, so as to let the light of the truth in. We're to help unbind people so that they can be free to follow the Lord Jesus. Dear church, there is no greater privilege than to be used by the Savior to roll away stones and unwrap grave clothes as we spread the good news that Jesus saves!

As we close, I'll let you know something that I'm sure won't surprise you: I still miss my grandfather. After 34 years, I still miss him, but I'm thankful that it **does get some easier with time**. But you know, there are certain smells, certain places, certain occasions that bring back the memories that are so thick that it takes your breath away. You know exactly what I'm talking about...you miss your mom, you miss your dad...God forbid, you miss a child, a grandparent...a brother or sister. And you hurt.

We all hurt because of death. Death is not natural for humans. God never intended us to die. So, we fight it and when it comes to our loved ones...when death takes them...we don't innately know how to deal with it because it's foreign...A FOREIGN ENEMY to humans. The raising of Lazarus from the dead was the precursor to Jesus' own resurrection, (that would take place in a matter of days). Lazarus' resurrection showed that Jesus had **power over death**. For you see church family, if Jesus could do nothing about death, then whatever else He did...well, it meant little. Hence:

1 Corinthians 15:19

19 If in Christ we have hope^[a] in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied.

But, church, we do have confidence in Jesus beyond this life...because Jesus is alive at this very moment. The tomb is empty!



He rose from the dead and that means DEATH HAS NO POWER HIM OR HIS PEOPLE! Jesus robbed the grave. Therefore, with the Apostle Paul we can say:

1 Corinthians 15:54b-56

⁵⁴ “Death is swallowed up in victory.” ⁵⁵ “O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?”
⁵⁶ The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. ⁵⁷ But thanks be to God, who gives us
the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Jesus won the victory over death and you can too...but you have to call on Him to win your victory...you must believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, confess and repent of your sins choosing to follow Him and you will be saved. You can do that today...we're here for you in the back, like always. Now to the Christian, if you're here today and you've been letting your present circumstances eat you alive...like death rotting a corpse. May I encourage you...please, stop looking at the corpse...stop looking at just what happens here...and look to Jesus, who is eternal life.