

Jason Smith Part 4: Final Boarding Call

Text: John 11:1–44

God may arrive later than we expected, but He is never late. His delays are designed to deepen our faith and reveal His glory.

Introduction: When It Feels Too Late

- At the airport, the words “final boarding call” create urgency.
- You may be standing near the gate and still feel like you are about to miss your flight.
- My flight from Rwanda a few years ago. Got caught at customs.
- Life can create that same feeling:
 - The opportunity passed.
 - The relationship ended.
 - The healing didn’t happen.
 - The door closed.
 - The situation appears beyond repair.
- Martha and Mary knew that feeling.
- They sent word to Jesus, but He did not arrive when they expected.
- There are many instances in our lives that we handcuff God to our expectations.
- We limit His power exclusively to our expectations.
- By the time Jesus reached Bethany, Lazarus had been dead for four days.
- Everyone thought the time for a miracle had passed—but Jesus was not finished.

Truth: God’s timing may confuse us, but it will never fail us.

1. The Delay Was Intentional

Scripture: John 11:5–6

⁵Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. ⁶So, when he heard that Lazarus^[a] was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was.

- Jesus loved Martha, Mary, and Lazarus.
- Yet after hearing that Lazarus was sick, Jesus remained where He was for two more days.
- His delay was not evidence of indifference.

- Jesus was operating according to eternal purpose—not human urgency.
- He was not coming merely to heal a sick man; He was coming to raise a dead man.
- God’s love does not always look like immediate action.
- Sometimes love allows us to wait because God is preparing to do something deeper.

Application:

- Don’t confuse God’s delay with God’s disinterest.
- Silence does not mean He has abandoned you.
- Waiting may be the place where God prepares you for a greater revelation.
- Continue trusting His heart when you cannot understand His timing.

Key: Sometimes the miracle needs a delay before its meaning becomes undeniable.

2. Trust God When You Don’t Understand

Scripture: John 11:21–27

¹⁷ Now when Jesus came, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days. ¹⁸ Bethany was near Jerusalem, about two miles^[a] off, ¹⁹ and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them concerning their brother. 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. ²² But even now I know that whatever you ask from God, God will give you.” ²³ Jesus said to her, “Your brother will rise again.” ²⁴ Martha said to him, “I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.” ²⁵ Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life.^[b] Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, ²⁶ and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?” ²⁷ She said to him, “Yes, Lord; I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who is coming into the world.”

- Martha honestly told Jesus, “If you had been here, my brother would not have died.”
- Her words contained both disappointment and faith.
- She was hurting, but she was still talking to Jesus.
- Faith does not require us to pretend that everything is fine.

- We can bring Jesus our questions, grief, anger, and confusion.
- Jesus responded by declaring, “I am the resurrection and the life.”
- Martha believed the miracle depended upon the right moment.
- Jesus revealed that the miracle depended upon the right Person.
- Jesus doesn’t merely possess resurrection power—He is the Resurrection.

Application:

- Bring your disappointment to Jesus instead of walking away from Him.
- Trust God’s character when you cannot see His activity.
- Your faith does not have to be flawless; it simply needs to remain connected to Jesus.
- Stay grounded in who He is—not merely in what you see.

Key: Faith says, “I don’t understand this moment, but I still trust the One who holds it.”

3. God Uses the Delay for Greater Glory

Scripture: John 11:43–44

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

- Lazarus had been in the tomb for four days.
- The family was grieving.
- The stone was in place.
- Everyone believed the story was over.
- Then Jesus called, “Lazarus, come out!”
- What appeared final had to surrender to the voice of Jesus.
- Had Jesus arrived earlier, people would have witnessed a healing.
- Because He waited, they witnessed a resurrection.
- The delay created the setting in which God’s glory became unmistakable.
- What looked like the end was actually the setup for something greater.

Application:

- Don’t quit simply because the situation appears dead.
- Don’t place an expiration date on God’s power.

- Your season of waiting may become the stage where His glory shines brightest.
- Instead of asking only, “Why did God delay?” ask, “What might God reveal through this?”

Key: **God can still speak life into places everyone else has declared dead.**

Final Boarding Call

- Throughout this series, we have learned that God is never rushed and never random.
- Moses experienced God in the wilderness.
- Paul experienced God through a rerouted mission.
- Elijah experienced God through rest and a gentle whisper.
- Martha and Mary experienced God when all hope appeared lost.
- In every story, the delay became an invitation:
 - To trust more deeply.
 - To depend upon God completely.
 - To recognize His presence.
 - To witness His glory.
- The final boarding call may sound late, but God has not forgotten you.
- Your delay is not necessarily a denial.
- Your setback may become the setting for God’s glory.
- Even when everything feels dead, Jesus is still the Resurrection and the Life.

Call to Action

This week:

- Identify one place where you feel God has arrived too late.
- Honestly bring your disappointment and questions to Him.
- Spend time praying without demanding an immediate answer.
- Choose to trust God’s character while you wait for His activity.
- Look for what He may be teaching, changing, or revealing.
- Refuse to walk away before the story is finished.

Challenge: Stay grounded. Trust His timing. Answer the final boarding call of faith. God is not finished, and resurrection may be closer than you think.