

THE MOMENT WE BELIEVE

“I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die.”—JOHN 11:25-26

When Lazarus became gravely ill, his sisters, Martha and Mary, sent word to Jesus, but He deliberately delayed His coming. By the time He arrived in Bethany, Lazarus had been dead for four days, lying in a tomb, wrapped in burial clothes. Family and friends were mourning his death. At separate intervals, his sisters heard that Jesus was there, and both rushed out, greeting Him in the exact same words. “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died” (John 11:32). In effect, they were telling Jesus, “You are too late.”

How often have we felt that way? We recognize that Jesus Christ is the source of life, but then we think if only He’d come sooner. If only Jesus had been here before this happened, or that happened. Like Martha and Mary, we’re left with a sense of hopelessness. Jesus said to Martha, “Your brother will rise again.” “I know he will rise again,” she answered, “in the resurrection at the last day.” Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life.”

Martha didn’t realize she was standing in the presence of the One who deals with the here and now. She hadn’t caught on to Jesus Christ being the answer to every need of the human heart. Deeply moved, He asked, “Where have you laid him?” Because of their unbelief, Jesus wept as He was led to the tomb. “Take away the stone,” He said. Martha still didn’t understand, and was reluctant because of the odor, but every act of God

is precipitated by an act of obedience, and Martha had the stone rolled away.

Jesus called out in a loud voice, “Lazarus, come out!” The onus was now on Lazarus, and he could do one of two things. He could respond to Jesus, get up and walk out, or he could remain in the tomb. John 11:44 very simply says, “The dead man came out.” “Take off the grave clothes,” Jesus said. “Loose him and let him go.”

Jesus delayed His coming, not so the people would see a miracle, but that the miracle would point to Him. He said in John 14:6, “I am the way, and the truth and the life.” It’s when we come in humility to Jesus, rolling the stone away and exposing our failures, anxieties, sin; all the grave clothes that have bound us for years, then Jesus loosens them. Many believed in Him that day and were saved. The work of Jesus Christ is to save, but He doesn’t wait till we’re on the threshold of heaven. His work begins the moment we believe.

PRAYER: Dear Precious Lord, my prayer is for everyone who hasn’t come to You yet. Draw them by your Spirit, Lord, and speak to their hearts.

TO REFLECT UPON: Do I make Jesus the first place I turn in times of grief and distress?