

DO YOU SEE? CAN YOU HEAR? DO YOU BELIEVE?

PART 4 - JOHN 11

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Do You See, Can You Hear, Do you Believe? Part 4

Scripture Reading

John 11:20-27 (NKJV)

20 Then Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met Him, but Mary was sitting in the house.

21 Now 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 of 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 at the last day."

25 Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. 26 And whoever 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 to come into the world."

Introduction

We are quickly approaching Easter week and we have allowed the Holy Spirit to take us through a journey in the Scriptures in the days leading up to Jesus' Triumphant entry into Jerusalem. But just days before and recorded chapters before, we see Jesus power at work in the lives of the sick and ostracized and His teachings going to work on the hearts of believers and unbelievers alike. His teachings and His miracles challenged what they could see what they heard and what they believed.

- John 8 challenged whether they "truly knew the Truth."

- John 9 challenged their ability to “truly see”
- John 10 challenged their ability to “truly hear the Good Shepherd”
- John 11 will challenge their ability to believe that Jesus had the power over death and life!

Can a Miracle Happen at Bethany?

John 11 places us geographically in an area that is often overlooked in its name. This place where Jesus would come and stay, in the home of Martha, Mary and Lazarus, was not a town known for its affluence or warm hospitality. What do we know about Bethany?

- Bethany is one of the notable names in the Bible during Jesus’ ministry journey. Not only is it the name of the place where he was anointed with precious oil by Mary (the sister of Lazarus) in Chapter 12, but it is also home to this seismic miracle of resurrection.
- the name Bethany is translated as the “House of Affliction.” Not a house of miracles, not a house of worship, but a house of affliction and misery
- Scholars say that it was called the house of misery ‘on account of its lonely situation and the invalids who often congregated there.’
- It was a place for the sick, persons who were weak or unable to take care of themselves on account of illness, injury, or a health condition

Isn’t it just like Jesus for Him to find a home and a place to come and rest with his close friends Lazarus, Martha and Mary in a place like Bethany. That somehow, in the midst of town surrounded by sickness, weakness, illness, injury and death, Jesus found a place to come and reside!

It tells me that when Jesus is looking for a place to reside and fellowship:

- He’s not looking at how poor it is
- He’s not looking at how healthy it is
- He’s not looking at the affluence of the area
- He’s not studying the demographics to see the best outcome for ministry
- He came to be amongst the sick and the dying
- He wasn’t after what they could give Him, He was after what He could give to them!

Can a miracle really happen at Bethany?

- Bethany didn’t know that it would become associated with a different Name.
- Bethany didn’t know that they’d be known for a miracle and not the misery they were known for.
- Bethany didn’t know that they would receive within their town borders the Giver of Life, the Resurrection and the Life, the Lord Jesus Himself who held the power of death and life in His Hands.

When Greater Glory Tests Your Faith

As John 11 takes us through this unmistakable story of Lazarus’ resurrection, perhaps the greatest of tests of faith was not with the crowd that were onlookers; the invalids that frequented the city. The greatest test of faith was with the ones He knew in Bethany; the ones He loved and had relationship with; the ones closest to Him. Martha, Mary and Lazarus.

John 11:2-7 (NKJV)

2 It was that Mary who anointed the Lord with fragrant oil and wiped His feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was

sick. 3 Therefore the sisters sent to Him, saying, "Lord, behold, he whom You love is sick."

4 When Jesus heard that, He said, "**This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified through it.**"

5 Now Jesus loved Martha and 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 this He said to the disciples, "Let us go to Judea again."

The Bible tells us that Martha, Mary and Lazarus were close with Jesus. He loved them and they loved Him. They were used to hosting Jesus in their home. So when Martha sent word to Jesus that Lazarus had died, there was an assumed closeness and sense of urgency with that message.

- Jesus "the one whom you love is sick"
 - Jesus I know you're ministering to people who don't know you all the time, but my brother (whom you known and love) is sick—please come quickly
 - Lord please prioritize the request of the family that knows you, takes care of you, has a personal relationship with you; could you please give this your utmost priority?
- Can you imagine the conversation that took place between Martha and the messenger she sent to get Jesus

Jesus didn't seem to treat this request with ANY sense of urgency.

Questions to consider:

1. What do you do when Jesus seems to answer the prayers of "newbies" faster than the prayers of the faithful?
2. What happens when God doesn't regard proximity as priority?

These questions challenge the notion of what we've often heard — that God prioritizes the cries of those who call on His Name regularly. Our understanding of what and who God prioritizes needs to be interrogated more closely.

For those who know the Lord more closely, often times He requires a greater measure of faith! This is what He said to His disciples.

John 11:11-15 (NKJV)

11 These things He said, and after that He said to them, "Our friend Lazarus sleeps, but I go that I may wake him up."

12 Then His disciples said, "Lord, if he sleeps he will get well." 13 However, Jesus spoke of his death, but they thought that He was speaking about taking rest in sleep.

14 Then Jesus said to them plainly, "Lazarus is dead. **15 And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, that you may believe.** Nevertheless let us go to him."

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Tears before the Glory

Jesus was able to hold it together to be able to talk with Martha.

- Martha was the first one He had to have answers for.
 - Martha was the organizer, the planner, the one who did things on time.
 - Martha was one of the ones He was close with.
 - Martha was a great student of the Scriptures and was versed in messianic prophecies and teachings.
 - Martha had wisdom to apply those teachings to Jesus.
 - Jesus had to have answers for her that she could receive and understand.
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- When Martha got the answers she was looking for, she sent for her sister Mary, saying "The Teacher has come and is calling for you."

Mary had a different disposition.

Mary had a level of devotion that kept her from staying busy; instead she stayed focused.

She would sit at the feet of Jesus as He taught.

This was a rabbinic relationship.

She got first hand teaching from Jesus.

So the idea that women were not allowed to learn the Scriptures or be taught the Scriptures needs more interrogation.

Jesus had a close relationship with 2 women who were great students!

John 11:32-35 (NKJV)

32 Then, when Mary came where Jesus was, and saw Him, she fell down at His feet, saying to Him, "Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died."

33 Therefore, when Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her weeping, He groaned in the spirit and was troubled. 34 And He said, "Where have you laid him?"

They said to Him, "Lord, come and see."

35 Jesus wept.

Jesus had no answers or revelations for Mary—He had deep empathy.

- Sometimes I don't need a revelation
- Sometimes I don't need Word
- Sometimes I don't need an explanation
- Sometimes I just need a God that knows how to cry with me.

The Bible records 3 times that Jesus cried:

- John 11:33 Therefore, when Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her weeping, He groaned in the spirit and was troubled. [EMPATHY]
- Luke 19:41 Now as He drew near, He saw the city and wept over it, 42 saying, "If you had known, even you, especially in this your day, the things that make for your peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. [REJECTION]
- Hebrews 5:7 who, in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications, with vehement cries and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death, and was heard because of His godly fear, [AGONY]

Hebrews 4:15a (NKJV)

15 For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses,

But each time He cried, it led to God revealing His Glory! Jesus teaches us some important lessons here:

- Greater Glory doesn't merely happen because of the power of God
 - power could have been on display if Jesus had arrived before Lazarus' death.
 - Glory was on display when Jesus raised Lazarus back to life
- Greater Glory doesn't merely happen when preparations are made and expectations are high
 - planning a date and time for the Lord to show up and show out
 - Glory happens when God comes because He chooses to do it in His timing and His way
- In John 11 Jesus CHOSE to reveal His Greater Glory after stepping into the pain and grief and loss of this family who He loved. There is deep connection between the miracle worker and the pain of the family who needed the miracle.

The Lord is willing to step into the pain of your family to heal you.

Do You Believe?

Jesus' conversation with Martha tested her faith on multiple levels. Jesus gave her revelation, realization and present relevance!

Revelation: John 11:23 Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again."

Martha perceived that Jesus was talking about resurrection but believed this was a "coming event" in the future

Realization: John 11:25 Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live.

Martha understood Jesus was saying that He is the resurrection and the life, but didn't fully understand what was about to happen

Relevance came when it came to Jesus directly standing in front of the one place that tests the power of revelation and realization—the stone!

The stone is the the **collision point** between:

- what she **heard**
- what she **understood**
- and what she is now being asked to **do**

John 11:39-40 (NKJV)

39 Jesus said, "Take away the stone."

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."

- But Lord, the trauma of my greatest fear is behind that stone
- But Lord the scent of my grief is behind that stone

- But Lord the evidence and embodiment of my deep loss is behind that stone
- Everyone is going to smell it
- Lord revealing this isn't going to help—it's too ugly it's too painful

39a Jesus said, "Take away the stone."

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

John 11:43-44 (NKJV)

43 Now when He had said these things, He cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth!" 44 And he who had died came out bound hand and foot with graveclothes, and his face was wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Loose him, and let him go."

- Jesus didn't just bring Lazarus out of the grave—
 - He made sure nothing from the grave stayed on him.
 - Loose him from what bound him
 - Release him from what identified him with death
 - Let him walk in the life he's been given
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- Faith is not proven when you understand what Jesus said
 - Faith is proven when you move the stone.

Close

3 powerful principles can be drawn from the John 11

- Jesus often comes to places like Bethany—a place of affliction
 - He is not afraid of the places marked by pain, loss, and sorrow. Jesus knows how to enter into the grief and pain that we are living in
- **Jesus knows how to enter into the grief and pain that we are living in.**
 - He doesn't stand at a distance—He steps into it with us.
- Jesus asks us to roll away the stone so that we can see Him restore what we've lost