

John 11

Big Idea: When life doesn't make sense, hold on because God's apparent absence is never His actual absence.

A Sudden Change in Circumstance

Life has a way of changing in an instant: one phone call, one doctor's appointment, one conversation, one accident, one unexpected loss. One moment and suddenly the life you expected seems far removed. The challenge comes when what we know about God doesn't seem to match what we are experiencing.

Series

Today we begin a new series called "Hold On." If you've ever found yourself wondering where God was in the middle of your pain, this series is for you. This series is about the times when God could have, He should have, but He didn't, and the crisis of faith that can produce.

Mary, Martha, and Lazarus

John 11 introduces us to one such family. They suddenly found themselves asking the same questions many of us have asked. There's Mary and her sister Martha, and their brother Lazarus. Jesus loves this family deeply. And yet they were about to walk through one of the darkest moments of their lives.

1. Hold On When God Delays (vv.1-7)

Jesus intentionally delayed His arrival even though He knew exactly what was about to happen. The delay was not because He didn't care. The delay was because He had a greater purpose. The sisters interpreted the delay as abandonment. Jesus understood it as preparation. God may be silent, but He is never absent.

2. Hold On When God Doesn't Make Sense (vv.14-21)

"If only you had been here..." Jesus could have prevented this, but He didn't. Martha is frustrated, even angry. Mary feels the same. Note that Jesus never rebukes them. He doesn't lecture them. He lets them grieve. He lets them hurt. He lets them struggle. When we cannot trace God's hand, we must learn to trust God's character.

3. Hold On Because God Is Still Working (vv.22-34)

While it is true that Jesus could have kept this from happening, He had a greater purpose in mind. Believe it or not, He had you and me in mind. He knew that after thousands of years we would read a story like this and take heart. Just because I cannot see a greater purpose in my suffering, that does not mean there isn't one.

We all know how the story ends. Verse 44 reads, *"The dead man came out..."* Jesus engineered this specific set of circumstances so that the witnesses that day, and the readers in our day, will hold on.

Family Night – Read John 11:1-44

- **Elementary School** – Ask, "Who greeted Jesus first? What did she say to Him? What did Jesus promise Martha? How long had Lazarus been in the tomb? What happened when Jesus called out to Lazarus?"
- **Middle/ High School** – Ask, "How do you think Martha and Mary felt when Jesus did not rush to their brother's side? What should we do when life (or God) doesn't make sense? Why do you think this account is in the Bible?"

Prayer: "Father, help us trust You even when we do not understand what You are doing in our circumstance. Amen.

Velocity (Middle and High School Students)

Velocity: This Wednesday, July 29 at 6:30.

Gravity: Gravity will resume this fall.

Today's Songs

Let It Rise.....Maranatha Praise

10,000 Reasons.....Bethel

It Really is Amazing Grace.....Phil Wickham

Hold On

New Series starts today. We have good reason to "hold on" even when it appears God is absent from our circumstances.

Promotion Sunday is August 2nd

Kids going to pre-school this fall move from The Beginner Class to KidsJAM. See parent letter at Beginner Desk.

Splash in the Boro for GCC is August 2nd

Cost is \$15 per person or \$45 per family. You pay at the gate as you enter. Snack Shack will be open. This is a great event to get a family you know to meet our church.

Baptism Service

August 16. Use the Communication Card if you have questions or would like to participate.