

Resurrection and Life

Places like Los Angeles and our culture in general are *event driven*; our church gatherings can also be event driven as well as our lives. What would our walk with Jesus look like without our church gathering on Sunday? He has not called us to be “event driven” believers; but rather “person driven”... Jesus.

Jesus wants us to bring the “real you” to our gatherings. It’s okay to bring our doubts, our disappointments, our suffering and our brokenness. The scriptures and our lives tell us that Jesus is love toward people who are suffering.

We often question God’s care for us during difficult times. We pray with an expectation of an answer we want and when we want it. We’re going to consider a few parts of the story of the resurrection of Lazarus and what it shows us about this very difficult subject.

What’s Love Got to Do With It?

“So the sisters sent word to Jesus, “Lord, the one you love is sick.”

⁴ When he heard this, Jesus said, “This sickness will not end in death. No, it is for God’s glory so that God’s Son may be glorified through it.”⁵ Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus”.

⁶ “So when he heard that Lazarus was sick, he stayed where he was two more days” (John 11:3-6)

The sisters sent word to Jesus about the “one you love” is sick. John goes out of his way to communicate the fact that Jesus loved Lazarus and his sisters Mary and Martha. So what’s love got to do with what was happening...absolutely nothing!

For many of us during our times of suffering, trials and the “dark nights of the soul”, we think something is wrong. We wonder does God care, does he really love me, where is he? The sisters must have been wondering the same thing, for after the message was delivered: *“he stayed where he was two more days”*.

When we face these times, we must realize that measuring God’s care and love by our circumstances is a poor measuring stick.

He loves you (us) period!

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Get that issue out of the way from the start, especially times when he is delayed or apparently absent. He loves you but you will experience trials and suffering, but there is an *ultimate goal*:

19 “My dear children, for whom I am again in the pains of childbirth until Christ is formed in you” (Galatians 4:19)

The other important thing, is that this passage tells us the *why*. Why did he delay, why did Lazarus have to die: *“it is for **God’s glory so that God’s Son may be glorified through it.**”* God calls us to be like Job in the middle of our suffering, our crisis of faith, etc.

9 “His wife said to him, “Are you still maintaining your integrity? Curse God and die!” 10 He replied, “You are talking like a foolish woman. Shall we accept good from God, and not trouble?” In all this, Job did not sin in what he said”. (Job 2:9-10)

Is Anyone There? Is Anyone Listening?

Many times in the midst of a difficult time of illness or disease, it is best for God to “graduate” people into his Kingdom and his presence. By the way, who are we to dictate to God what and when; he is the all-knowing God, not us.

We need to acknowledge his *love* and *faithfulness*, despite what our circumstances are saying. So *how* do we come to know his faithfulness? Ironically it is by walking through that “Dark Night” that we grow in our knowledge of him and his character!

Revelation Awaits Us

25 “Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; 26 and whoever lives by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this?” (John 11:25-26)

It’s okay to come to church angry, hurt, even broken. At times we don’t know where God is, but he knows where we are. Some could even view this as an “event”, but we need to hear Jesus say: *“I am the resurrection”*. This is not an “event” of resurrection, (future or present) the resurrection walks with us every minute of every day. He then asks us a simple yet crucial question, *“Do you believe this?”*

Proverbs 13:12 says: *“Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but a longing fulfilled is a tree of life”*. During those times when our heart is sick, we are downcast, discouraged and confused; Jesus walks the “night shift” with us.

“Don’t attend events attend to the person of Jesus”

Where Have You Laid Him...Your Lazarus?

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We all have dreams, hopes, expectations, things that have died; we need to hear Jesus ask us where we have laid them. These can be relationships, our marriage, our business, or our children who have wandered or walked away from Jesus.

God does his best work when something has died, things that can only be raised by the power of his Spirit.

Jesus wants to enter the place where our hope has died.

Discussion Questions

- 1) What is the difference between being an “Event Driven Believer” and a “Person Driven Believer”? This is clearly seen as the sisters saw this as an event and Jesus was saying “I am the Resurrection”.
- 2) Martha and Mary were faced with a couple of very difficult things. Please discuss the fact that they called out to Jesus and he was “delayed”. Secondly, after they sent out the message of the “one you love” do you believe they questioned his love and care for them.
- 3) During your “dark night of the soul” times did you find yourself doubting God’s love and care for you? Also please discuss what Pastor Keith suggested: “that measuring God’s care and love by our circumstances is a poor measuring stick”.
- 4) In our study there were two foundational truths in relation to this subject. Please talk about the fact that despite what suffering and trials we are experiencing, we have to be solid in the fact that God loves and cares for us despite what we are facing and experiencing. Secondly, the ultimate goal is much larger than a healing or need meet it is so that *God will be glorified* and that: ***“Christ is formed in you”***.
- 5) Keith talked about times when it feels like no one is listening and no one is there. Please discuss our need to acknowledge his *love* and *faithfulness*, despite what our circumstances are saying. Along with the fact that we come to know his faithfulness, ironically by walking through that “Dark Night”.
- 6) This may be a tough one, but please share your “Lazarus”. Maybe for you it’s a dream that never materialized, something you felt was from God that didn’t happen, a failed relationship, a child or grandchild that has wandered from the faith, etc. Pray for each other, re-enforce God’s love, care and presence. On a personal level you and Jesus need to visit that “Lazarus” and believe him to work in you through the dark night.

