

A Greater Glory

Introduction

This is the last of a three part series on Mary. Although there are 5 different Mary's mentioned in scripture this Mary is distinctive from the others because of her brother and sister. She is also unique because in all three encounters we see her at the feet of Jesus.

Like her sister Martha and her brother Lazarus she has a very close relationship with Jesus. So we can understand their response as their brother becomes sick and dies and Jesus doesn't respond as quickly as they had hoped. Jesus will show them several important things through this incident, including: "a greater glory".

Text

John 11:1-44

The Delay

"Now a man named Lazarus was sick. He was from Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. 2 (This Mary, whose brother Lazarus now lay sick, was the same one who poured perfume on the Lord and wiped his feet with her hair.) 3 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, 7 and then he said to his disciples, "Let us go back to Judea."

8 "But Rabbi," they said, "a short while ago the Jews there tried to stone you, and yet you are going back?"

9 Jesus answered, "Are there not twelve hours of daylight? Anyone who walks in the daytime will not stumble, for they see by this world's light. 10 It is when a person walks at night that they stumble, for they have no light."

11 After he had said this, he went on to tell them, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep; but I am going there to wake him up." 12 His disciples replied, "Lord, if he sleeps, he will get better." 13 Jesus had been speaking of his death, but his disciples thought he meant natural sleep. 14 So then he told them plainly, "Lazarus is dead, 15 and for your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him." 16 Then Thomas (also known as Didymus) said to the rest of the disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with him."

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Jesus had a very special relationship with Lazarus, Martha and Mary. Reflected in the words of the sister's message: *"Lord, the one you love is sick."* The scriptures confirmed this fact: *"Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus"*.

So when Jesus, (V6) heard this news he stayed where he was for two more days.

He explained to his disciples that: *"it is for God's glory"* that this was occurring.

Something of pain and sorrow was allowed to happen in their lives.

Questions begin to creep in;

"What's the hold up"?

"Why is he delaying"?

Why, because "a greater glory" could not happen any other way.

15" and for your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe"

He is after our faith, God not only wants our love he wants our **Trust**.

He is after a deepening of our faith, he wants us to believe and put our trust in him.

Trusting him despite what your circumstances are screaming at you.

We hear this phrase a lot: "I can't believe in a God who..."

Can you trust God without an agenda?

Truth and Tears

17 On his arrival, Jesus found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days. 18 Now Bethany was less than two miles from Jerusalem, 19 and many Jews had come to Martha and Mary to comfort them in the loss of their brother. 20 When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went out to meet him, but Mary stayed at home.

21 "Lord," Martha said to Jesus, "if you had been here, my brother would not have died. 22 But I know that even now God will give you whatever you ask." 23 Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again." 24 Martha answered, "I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day." 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?" 27 "Yes, Lord," she replied, "I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, who is to come into the world."

28 After she had said this, she went back and called her sister Mary aside. "The Teacher is here," she said, "and is asking for you." 29 When Mary heard this, she got up quickly and went to him. 30 Now Jesus had not yet entered the village, but was still at the place where Martha had met him. 31 When the Jews who had been with Mary in the house, comforting her, noticed how quickly she got up and went out, they followed her, supposing she was going to the tomb to mourn there. 32 When Mary reached the place where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet and said, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." 33 When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come along with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in spirit and troubled. 34 "Where have you laid him?" he

been here, my brother would not have died. 35 When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come along with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in spirit and troubled. 34 “Where have you laid him?” he asked. “Come and see, Lord,” they replied.
35 Jesus wept. 36 Then the Jews said, “See how he loved him!” 37 But some of them said, “Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?”
38 Jesus, once more deeply moved, came to the tomb. It was a cave with a stone laid across the entrance. 39 “Take away the stone,” he said. “But, Lord,” said Martha, the sister of the dead man, “by this time there is a bad odor, for he has been there four days.” 40 Then Jesus said, “Did I not tell you that if you believe, you will see the glory of God?”
41 So they took away the stone. Then Jesus looked up and said, “Father, I thank you that you have heard me. 42 I knew that you always hear me, but I said this for the benefit of the people standing here, that they may believe that you sent me.” 43 When he had said this, Jesus called in a loud voice, “Lazarus, come out!” 44 The dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth around his face. Jesus said to them, “Take off the grave clothes and let him go.”

Lazarus had been in the tomb for 4 days, the decaying process in in a full steam a head mode.

Martha gets word and runs to meet Jesus before he even makes it into the town.

She said: *“if you had been here, my brother would not have died”*

Translation: “Jesus this is all your fault” Before we’re too hard on her we even say: “If only you had...”

Maybe thinking: “He took care of the Roman Centurions need immediately and he is part of that oppressive force against Israel”

She is thinking, not a word from you for 4 days...she is speaking from a place of hurt.

Mary then came to Jesus with the same response, but he responds differently to each of them.

- To Martha he responds with truth, the truth that he is the *“Resurrection and the Life”* This will be a stunning *revelation* that he is the “I am” from the burning bush to Moses...He is deity, he is God.
- The first century Church didn’t explain the resurrection they proclaimed it! When Jesus died it all died because He was the message.
- Jesus didn’t come to bring and leave parables, teachings, etc. He came to bring life, so he asked her “do you believe”?
- Jesus came to swallow up death, hell, sin, pain and sorrow and bring Glory out of them.
- He responds to Mary in a different fashion. Jesus was moved and began to cry with Mary and those around her.
- To Martha he responds in truth, with Mary it is tears; Jesus was both truth and tears. He responds like this because he is our High Priest.

“For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin.”

(Hebrews 4:15)

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“Truth without tears is just information, and Tears without truth are just empathy. Tears with Truth, that's Jesus”!

(V38) He was “deeply moved” this is a “Righteous Rage”

The word for “*deeply moved*” (*embrimaomai*) can be used of snorting in animals and in humans refers to anger.

A picture of a champion who is ready to enter to arena and his nostrils are flaring with anticipation of the battle.

Jesus is not mad at anyone there, he is angry at death and ready to do battle and confront this enemy.

But we end with the appropriate response to this, (V45) “many believed”.

Mary and Martha believed, we are called to believe and trust.

Life Group Sermon Application Curriculum Leader's Guide

Week of **03/29/15**

"Open: A Greater Glory"

(I shared this story during our Fall Life Group study in John)

It was a typical drizzly Oregon coast day, with a small little wooden casket waiting to be lowered in the ground. The young parents didn't know any Pastor's or Priest so they knocked on my office door. Their baby had died during childbirth and they wanted to bury their little girl. As a young pastor and to this day I've never delivered a tougher sermon. I remember the mix of emotions I felt watching these young parents mourn the loss of the daughter. But strangely, I was also angry, at this fallen world, the medical condition that took her life, at the enemy and at death itself. Because of his great love for us, God also hates death...I'm thankful he had the power to do something about it!

Main Sermon text: (John 11:1-44)

There are some **consistent themes**, and key points, that emerge from these passages:

- When Jesus was notified of Lazarus severe illness he stayed where he was for two more days. He explained to his disciples that: *"it is for God's glory"* that this was occurring. They and the two sisters would eventually realize that pain and sorrow was allowed in their lives to accomplish something ("a greater glory") that couldn't be accomplished any other way.
- The second reason was found in Jesus words: *"and for your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe"*. He wants them/us to believe, he is after our faith. God not only wants our love he wants us to trust him. Trusting him despite what your circumstances are screaming at you.
- Jesus arrives but Lazarus has been in the tomb for 4 days. Martha and Mary go out to Jesus separately making almost the identical statements. Jesus responds differently to each of them. To Martha he speaks truth that he is the resurrection and the life, but he cried with Mary. He is our High Priest and understands our pain and loss.
- Scripture said that Jesus was "deeply moved", Pastor Randy used the phrase: "Righteous Rage". The original language bears this out; the word for *"deeply moved"* (*embrimaomai*) can be used of snorting in animals and in humans refers to anger. We get a picture of a champion who is ready to enter to arena and his nostrils are flaring with anticipation of the battle. Jesus is not mad at anyone there, he is angry at death and ready to do battle and confront this enemy.

enemy.

Discussion questions/prompts for your group: (These questions are designed to help your group go deeper, understanding and applying the Bible passage(s) and the sermon)

- 1) After reading our passage put yourself in the place of the disciples and Martha and Mary. How would you be feeling at this point? How would you respond to Jesus that he didn't come when you needed him the most? Now in hindsight what did Jesus mean that this is for *God's Glory* and something else was being accomplished here that was a "Greater Glory".
- 2) Then Jesus tells his disciples: "*and for your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe*". The most important over-arching truth is that God wants us to believe and trust him, despite what the circumstances are telling you. Discuss times when what God's Word or something God had spoken to your heart clashed up against circumstances.
- 3) As we have seen from our passage, Jesus responds differently to Martha and Mary. In our lives with God and with people, discuss about the difference between speaking truth and crying with those who are crying. Also how do you see his role as High Priest (Hebrews 4:15) play in this truth?
- 4) We know that the original word translated as "deeply moved" carries with it the idea of anger or righteous rage. Don't let this confuse you; Jesus is not angry with any one in this story. He is angry at "Death" an enemy Jesus will defeat with his resurrection from the grave and ultimately throw in the Lake of Fire at the end. (Revelation 20:14) How does it make you feel and maybe change your perspective of Jesus, seeing him in this role of the warrior about to do battle with Death?

For those who might like to use visual aids in their Bible storying, or study preparation, especially for groups with children, here are some helpful links:

<http://missionbibleclass.org/1b0-new-testament/new-testament-part-1/life-of-christ-middle/mary-and-martha/>

<http://ministry-to-children.com/many-silent-years/>

<http://www.raisingourkids.com/coloring-pages/printable/bible/index-02.html>

Log on and check "Right now Media" there are several good resources that will relate to this study for the kids. Some are for pre-school and older, so go surfing and see if you can find something for your group.