



JOHN 11:1-16

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.” Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. Yet when he heard that Lazarus was sick, he stayed where he was two more days.
(verses 4-6)

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Timing. Oh, how troubling it is to wait in uncertain apprehension.

I think of this story from Lazarus’ perspective. He endured a life-threatening sickness, day after day. Finally, it got him. What was his death like? Painful? A slow fading? Peaceful? Agonized? We don’t know. But Lazarus went through it.

I think of his sisters, anxious and worried, worn out with care, hour by hour. Then grieving, deeply. Questioning whether the Master had gotten their message. If not, what got in the way? If so, why hadn’t he come?

I think of the disciples watching the drama unfold. I imagine they heard the news when Jesus received it. I imagine they were the ones who heard his affirmation that, *“This sickness will not end in death. No, it is for God’s glory so that God’s Son may be glorified through it”* (verse 4). Why then, they might ask, did Jesus wait? Wasn’t there some urgency? And when they heard him later say, *“Lazarus is dead”*, what were they to make of it? And why would he say, *“I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe”* (verse 15)? Confused, on the edge of their seats, they followed him back to Judea.

We, of course, know the end of the story. Lazarus, dead for four days, comes out of the tomb at Jesus’ command. Disentangled from grave clothes, he is given back to his dumbfounded sisters, alive.

We know this event provides the context for Jesus’ profound declaration, *“I am the resurrection and the life!”* (verses 25-26). We know it reveals his heart as he grieves over death and the impact on his friends. We know it caused many at that time to believe and enter into life themselves. We know it has caused many to do so since. We know the end result for Martha and Mary, and Lazarus himself, would have been life changing, faith building and never to be forgotten. We see that it was truly for God’s glory. Unquestionably, Jesus was glorified through it.

As a result, I can’t imagine this story being played out any differently. I am incredibly thankful that Jesus waited two days. A milestone of faith would have been lost without.

But neither Lazarus nor his sisters nor the disciples could have known any of that at the time. For them, they simply waited in uncertain apprehension.

Which reminds me to trust. When my circumstances are uncertain, when confusion descends – trust. I am his. My chief end is to glorify God and enjoy him forever. But the process of bringing him glory may be entirely different than I imagine. The timing may be difficult. The process troubling.

So, I will remember Lazarus. I will remember the Lord knew what he was doing when he waited. I will remember it’s all for his glory. And it is good.

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Lord Jesus, years back we used to sing the song, “In my life, Lord, be glorified.” I sing it again now. Remembering Lazarus, I sing it. I don’t know what it will bring,

*but I choose to trust. Please strengthen me when the days draw out – 1, 2, 3, 4.
Please keep my eyes on you.*

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Reflect:

In what circumstance do you find yourself waiting, right now? Imagine your future-self, knowing the end of the story. What counsel would you give yourself now? How would it shape your present perspective?