

On Jesus' Timetable

Scripture: John 11:17 – 27

Sept. 3rd, 2023

In Jesus Christ, we have a power source that can breathe new life into the dead. In Christ we have the source to breathe life into our bodies. Oh yes my friends, our bones can rise again! Dem bones can rise again!

When Jesus lived on earth, he traveled at what seems to us to be a slow pace which sometimes seemed to disappoint his friends. Let us look at our scripture reading verse by verse from the Gospel of John.

In verse 17 – Jesus arrives and finds that Lazarus has died and his body has been in the tomb for four days. Jesus arrives late! He could have gotten there earlier but he arrives late and finds that Lazarus has died.

The distance from Bethany to Jerusalem is only two miles away. It was only a 40 minute walk from Bethany to Jerusalem. Bethany is in the backyard of Jerusalem.

In verse 19 - we hear that many people have gathered with Mary and Martha to console them on the death of their brother.

In verse 20 – we find that Martha heard that Jesus was coming so she went to greet him and Mary stayed at home. This is a very different scene than when Jesus came to Mary and Martha home to visit some time ago. It was Martha who worked hard around the house to prepare for dinner for Jesus while Mary sat at Jesus' feet to listen to his teaching.

Mary and Martha had sent word to Jesus that their brother Lazarus was sick, very sick! They knew Jesus could help. Jesus gets the message but he decides to wait awhile to go to visit Lazarus. It seems that Jesus does not live at a quick pace. It seems that Jesus was in no rush to go to Lazarus and heal him!

In verse 21 & 22 – Martha goes out to meet Jesus and she says – ‘Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died! But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask of him.’ What a statement of faith!

I always wonder why Martha does not greet Jesus with these words - Jesus, you did not move fast enough. Jesus, you did not move at a quick pace and my brother has died!

But Jesus has bigger plans – much bigger plans! In verse 23 – Jesus tells Martha ‘Your brother will rise again!’ But in verse 24 – Martha seems confused by what Jesus has just told her. Martha responds ‘I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.’

Then in verse 25 & 26– Jesus shares these glorious words – ***I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die.***

Then comes the question that each of us each day must wrestle with. Then come the question that we need to answer each day of our lives – ***Do you believe this?***

Do you believe in Jesus Christ?

Our scripture story ends with Martha responding – ‘Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the One coming into the world!’

Can we relate to Martha’s desperation? Can you relate to Martha desperation? I can! Sometimes I long for Jesus to move quickly to answer my prayers. Sometimes, it seems like Jesus is late! Do we feel the same way? Do you feel the same way?

Jesus sovereign schedule is different from ours. Jesus accomplishes his saving works on his timetable, not ours! And the ultimate outcome displays his glory and goodness in ways that are so much greater than our plans.

Have you ever been disappointed that Jesus seemingly did not answer a prayer? Have you realized that Jesus will accomplish something greater for those who wait?

Let us seek out Jesus and never doubt his plans for us. I know we want him to answer our prayers on our timeline, but let us seek his answers at God’s speed!

This miracle of raising Lazarus from the dead is different than the other miracles Jesus did. The main difference is that Jesus did this miracle just two miles from Jerusalem. Jesus did this miracle a stone throw from the Holy Temple. Jesus did this miracle in the Sadducees and Pharisees backyard.

All his other miracles where in the Galilean area, far from Jerusalem. This miracle – raising Lazarus from the dead – took place just a 40 minute walk away from Jerusalem!

This was the straw that broke the Pharisees, Sadducees, and the Temple's back! Something had to now be done with Jesus! Jesus cannot come into their neighborhood and do such things.

The miracle of raising Lazarus from the dead starts the end of Jesus' earthly ministry. And the question he asked of Martha is the question we need to struggle with. ***Do you believe?***

Let us pray:

O Father, sometimes we get so impatient. Help us to trust in your perfect timing and to cling to your goodness in faith. Let us also see Jesus power in this great miracle of raising Lazarus from the dead. May we answer the question that was asked of Martha on the day - ***Do you believe?*** And may we answer Jesus' words - ***I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die.***

May we respond to this statement with our lives and talents because Christ is the resurrection and the life! AMEN.

Now let us listen to some special music by Teresa Swihart entitled 'Wade in the Water'.

This song was sung by slaves just before the Civil War as a signal that that night there would be an escape attempt from slavery. Teresa