

Mary and Martha's Message to Our Lord When Their Brother Lazarus Was Sick John 11:1-16

by R.A. Torrey

Jesus delays coming to those He loves so that He might give them a greater blessing.

Scripture: John 11:1

Topics: "Faith in God's Timing", "The Nature of Death"

Description

R.A. Torrey explores the story of Mary and Martha as they send a message to Jesus about their brother Lazarus's illness, emphasizing their faith in His ability to heal. Despite their urgent plea, Jesus delays His arrival, demonstrating that His timing is not always aligned with human expectations, but serves a greater purpose. Torrey highlights that sickness and death, even among those loved by Christ, can ultimately lead to God's glory and the strengthening of faith. The sermon encourages believers to trust in God's plan, even when it seems delayed or perplexing. Ultimately, it reassures that death is not the end for those who believe in Christ, but a temporary sleep until resurrection.

Transcript

DISCOVERY OF FACTS

1. The Messenger from Mary and Martha Brings Tidings to Our Lord of the Sickness of Their Brother Lazarus, vv. 1-6 In what home is our Lord recorded as having visited more frequently than any other? What shadow had now fallen upon that home? To whom did Martha and Mary turn in their extremity? Where was He now? (10:40.) How far away was that? To whom should we turn in every extremity? (Matt. 11:28-30; Phil: 4:6, 7.) What message did they send Him? What were its characteristics?

Did they ask Him to come? Why not? Did He come? Did He come as quickly as these sisters considered necessary, and expected? Why not? What does their message show that they were confident that He could do? Can He heal all sickness? Did He deem it best in this case to heal the sickness immediately? Will He in our case always deem it best to heal our sickness immediately? Were they right in saying that our Lord loved Lazarus (v. 5)? Did He love Lazarus and Martha and Mary in a way in which He did not love all His disciples?

Are there any disciples today for whom He has a peculiar attachment? Is a universal love for all men inconsistent with a peculiar form of love for certain individuals? Can one who is the especial object of the

Saviour's love be sick? How sick was Lazarus? Can one whom our Lord loves be sick unto death and actually die? Is the theory that those who are nearest and dearest to Him cannot sicken and die well founded, or is it baseless? What did our Lord say when He heard that Lazarus was sick?

Was not this sickness unto death in any sense? In what sense was it not unto death? Was Lazarus' so-called death really death, or simply a four-days' sleep? Does a believer ever die? (v. 26.) What then is what we call death? (1 Thess. 4:15.) Is it an unconscious sleep? (Phil. 1:23; 2 Cor. 5:1-8. R. V.; Luke 16:19-31; 23:43.) Do we worry when our friends fall asleep at the close of the day? Ought we to worry if they sleep a little longer than usual? How much longer than usual did Lazarus sleep in this case?

How much longer than usual will those who fall asleep in Jesus sleep? For what purpose did our Lord say this sickness came to Lazarus? For what purpose is the sickness of all believers? How was God glorified in this special instance? In other cases how is He glorified? (See 9:3.) How can we make sure that the Son of God may be glorified in our sicknesses? When our Lord heard that Lazarus was sick what did He do (v. 6)? Why? (Note "Therefore.") How would it seem at first thought, that His love to Martha and Mary and Lazarus would have brought Him at once to their side or that it would have kept Him from going to them?

Does He ever delay His coming to us just because He loves us? What did Martha and Mary desire from Him? Had He anything better than healing to give them? Has He anything better than healing to give us for our loved ones? What? (v. 43, 44; Phil. 1:23; 1 Thess. 4:16.) If the resurrection of our loved ones does not come in four days, of what may we be sure? Will it be long before Jesus comes and raises our loved ones? (Rev. 22:20; 1 Thess. 4:13-18.) Did those four days seem long to Martha and Mary?

Were they perplexed by His not coming? Does the time we have to wait for Him seem long? Do we need to be perplexed by it? What question must Mary and Martha have asked themselves again and again as they stood by the bed of Lazarus and saw his life fading away? What was the true answer to this question? Why is it that our Lord does not come to us at once and heal our loved ones? 2. Our Lord Goes to Martha and Mary and Lazarus, vv. 7-16 What apparently good reason had He for not going into Judea again (v. 8)?

Did His going back, humanly speaking, hasten His death? (v. 46-53.) What answer did He make to the protest of His disciples? What is the point in that answer? While a man's allotted day lasts, against what is he safe? What is the real place of safety? What is everything outside of God's will (v. 10)? What did our Lord say of Lazarus in the 14th verse? What that He had already said did this seem to contradict (v. 4)? Did it really contradict it? Are our loved ones dead? Why did He say that Lazarus was dead (v. 12)?

How did He first speak of him (v. 11)? For what purpose did He say He was coming to Lazarus? For what purpose may we be sure that He will some day come to our sleeping loved ones? (1 Thess. 4:16.) Of what does He say He was glad (v. 15)? For whose sake? If Jesus, the Prince of Life, had been there, what would have fled away abashed? How was God more glorified and their faith more greatly strengthened? What then was one purpose of this whole transaction? Are you glad that He was not there and so Lazarus died?

If He had been there and Lazarus had not died, what would we have lost? Would the loss of this 11th chapter of John be much to the church? Will the day ever come when we will be glad that our Lord did not come more quickly to the sick bed of our loved ones when we called Him, but permitted them to fall asleep for a season? From what do all our perplexities and griefs over God's dealings arise? (Ro. 11:33.) Who stands forth at this point as a doubter, and as one who always looked on the dark side of things (v. 16)?

Yet what did he show himself to be? Are there many doubters of the Thomas type? CLASSIFICATION OF TEACHINGS

1. Jesus Christ

(1). His nature:

Divine, 4, 11, 14; human, 6, 8, 9, 10, 15, 16.

(2). His attributes:

Omniscience, 4, 11, 14; omnipotence, 11; love, 3, 5.

(3). What He did:

He loved Martha and Mary and Lazarus with a peculiar love, 5; knew what was going on at a distance, 4, 11, 14; glorified the Father, 4; delayed going to His loved ones who seemed to need His help that He might give them a greater blessing, 6; fearlessly faced death that He might bring blessing to those whom He loved, 8-16; taught that any man is safe and no one can touch him until his work is done, 9; raised the dead, 11.

(4). How He was treated:

Depended upon and sought after by those who believed in Him, 1-3; hated and persecuted unto death by the Jews, 8, 16; misunderstood by His disciples, 12, 16.

2. Mary

An object of the Saviour's peculiar love, 5; anointed Him with ointment and wiped his feet with her hair, 2; was allowed to lose her brother for a time, 2; had her brother restored to her after a short sleep, 11-13; sent to the Lord in her extremity, 3; her Lord whom she loved did not seem to heed her message, 6; though apparently disregarded, it was only that she might obtain a greater blessing, 6-15.

3. Lazarus

An object of the Lord's peculiar love, 3, 5; fell sick, 3; died, 14; his death apparent, not real, 4, 11; after a brief sleep raised from apparent death, 11.

4. Sickness

Is for the glory of God, 4; one whom Jesus loves may be sick even unto death, 3, 5; is subject to the power of Jesus, 3, 11.

5. Death

Even those who are objects of our Lord's love may appear to die, 3, 5, 14; the apparent death of those whom He loves is not real death, but only sleep, 4, 11, 14; when He comes apparent death gives place to resurrection, 11-15.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/ra-torrey/mary-and-marthas-message-to-our-lord-when-their-brother-lazarus-was-sick-john-11/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net