



And just as the boy is about to finish off his father, his father explains to him why he gave him that name.

He said, Son, this world is rough, and if a man's going to make it, he's got to be tough. And I knew that I wouldn't be there to help you along.

So I gave you that name, and I said goodbye. I knew you'd have to get tough or die, and it's that name that helped to make you strong. Now, you just fought one heck of a fight, and I know you hate me, and you got the right to kill me now, and I wouldn't blame you if you do.

[ 7 : 34 ] But you ought to thank me before I die for the gravel in your gut and the spit in your eye, because I'm the one that went and named you Sue. And in a shocking turn of events, the song ends, and the boy drops his gun, embraces his father, and, quote, walks away with a different point of view, even though he still hates the name Sue.

Now, Faith Family, that's kind of a humorous example of the point that I want us to think about tonight, and I want you to listen closely. Have you ever experienced a love that didn't feel like love at all?

Have you ever experienced a love that didn't feel like love at all? Like in the song, the boy thinks his father must hate me to give me such a name, a name that would cause such shame and suffering in my life.

But what he comes to discover by the end of the song is that it was actually given to him out of love to build character and toughness in his son. Let me ask you, have you ever experienced love that didn't feel like love?

For some of you, it may have been a coach that loved you enough to push you, get in your face, and be honest, in those moments, that didn't feel like love. For some of you, you know what this is like on either end of the spectrum.

[ 9 : 09 ] A parent that loves you enough to discipline you, but in moments like that, it sure doesn't feel like love. Or maybe it's a pastor that loves you enough to preach hard passages to bring conviction in your life, but in those moments of conviction, it sure doesn't feel like love.

Or what about a friend that loves you enough to give you some needed criticism? And in that moment of criticism, it sure doesn't feel like love. Or what about when it comes to God?

That God loves you so much that He brought suffering into your life, and in the moment, it sure didn't feel like love.

Faith family, that is exactly what we see here in John chapter 11. In fact, in many ways, like in John 9, with the man that was born blind, listen, Jesus here in John 11 is going to stage suffering. He's going to purpose pain. He's going to manufacture a misunderstanding so that He can perform a miracle in the name of love.

[ 10 : 29 ] And in the early stages, in the early moments of this, it doesn't look like love at all. Verse 1 says, Now a certain man was ill, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary, and her sister Martha.

It was Mary who anointed the Lord with ointment and wiped His feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was ill. So the sisters sent to Him, saying, Lord, He whom You love is ill.

Now jump down to verse 5. Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. Here's the first kind of big idea I want you to see in this passage, and it's that love purposes suffering.

Love purposes suffering. Here's the setting. Lazarus is sick to the point of death. Much like the official son in John chapter 4, there is only one way that Lazarus is going to be able to survive this. He needs a miracle. That's the only hope they have. And so who do you call when you need a miracle? You call Jesus. Because by now, in John chapter 11, we have seen His power.

[ 11 : 57 ] We have witnessed many of His miracles. We have come to know that there is nothing impossible with Him. There is not any situation that Jesus cannot overcome, and so they call for Him.

Now we have one added thing to this passage that we have not seen quite so much of in the other passages. Namely, Jesus has a very special relationship with this family.

He is very close to them personally. It's why John has gone out of his way to emphasize this in the early verses. You can glance at verse 2 again.

It won't be on the screen. It says that Mary anointed Jesus' feet. John here is showing you the kind of special relationship that Mary and Jesus have.

They have a very unique bond, something that is very special. In verse 3, it says, Lord, He whom you love is ill.

[13:00] In verse 5, Jesus loved Martha, Mary, and Lazarus. In fact, later on in this passage, you're going to discover that Jesus calls Lazarus His friend.

Three times. Three times. In the opening verses of chapter 11, John is trying to communicate, listen to the reader, Jesus really loves this family.

There is a very special bond and relationship between them. And so based on what we know about Jesus, and based on the special relationship Jesus has with this family, we assume, rightly, that Jesus is going to drop everything immediately and go to them.

which is why verse 6 is so strange. So, now that word so is very important. So, or therefore, when he heard that Lazarus was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was.

And you're left to be like, what? That's not the response you would expect out of Jesus. I mean, John, you've just been telling us how much Jesus loves these people.

[14:24] This isn't how love responds. I mean, if this is love, I'd hate to see hate, right? It's love that sure doesn't look like love.

John is essentially saying this. Is everybody listening tonight? Jesus loved Lazarus so much he let him die. That is what the text is saying.

In fact, Jesus later on in the passage is going to brag about it. Look at what he says to the disciples in verse 14. John chapter 11 verse 14. Then Jesus told them plainly, Lazarus has died and for your sake I am glad I was not there.

Again, you're like, what? What are you doing? Somebody please give Jesus some social skills. This guy doesn't know how to like properly behave in front of people.

Be honest, faith family. As we have gone through this series over the last several weeks, have we not seen Jesus' behavior be a little socially awkward?

[15:33] To a grieving father in John 4 he says, all you want is another sign. To a woman who has a demon-possessed child he says, why should I feed the dogs?

To his own mother, to his own mom, he says, woman, what does this have to do with me? I mean, Jesus repeatedly here, now even with the disciples, about a dying man he allegedly loves, says, I sure am glad I wasn't there when he died.

If this is love, it sure doesn't look like it. Amen? It doesn't look like love at all. In fact, think about it a little more deeply with me.

By choosing to delay, Jesus causes, he doesn't allow, he causes. By choosing to delay, he causes, number one, Mary and Martha an enormous amount of grief.

How many of you, listen, don't raise your hand or anything like that, I want you to think about the person in your life that you've lost and have grieved the most. Do you remember what that time of grieving was like?

[16:51] Do you remember the heartache and the suffering? I mean, I've shared with you before when I got the phone call that my grandfather passed away, I mean, it was like somebody stabbed me in my stomach.

Like, I felt awful and it was painful and it was dark and some of you, listen, Jesus caused that. For Mary and Martha when he delays.

Secondly, is he causes Lazarus to go through the process of dying. Now I want you to think, some of you have been in this situation where you have been with someone in their final hours and some of you have been with people that maybe they were fighting cancer or maybe they were on hospice and you know that in those final moments that they were suffering.

Jesus causes Lazarus to go through the dying process. Jesus did this on purpose and some of you are uncomfortable with that but I will not let you explain this away because you say, how do you know he did this on purpose?

Well, first of all, we learned in John chapter 4 with the sick son of the official that Jesus doesn't even have to be physically present to heal somebody. Do you remember?

[18:06] He healed the official son from like 15 to 20 miles away. Meaning, if Jesus wanted Lazarus healed before dying, he can do so but he doesn't do so.

Secondly, Jesus even says this is on purpose. Look at verse 4. But when Jesus heard it, he said, this illness does not lead to death.

It is for, that is, here's the purpose for it, the glory of God so that the Son of God may be glorified through it.

In other words, like the blind man in John chapter 9, Jesus is saying all the pain and all the suffering that is happening in this moment is happening according to the purpose of God.

For his glory, that the Son of God may be glorified through it. Notice it on the screen, Faith Family, and I know some of you are uncomfortable and I love it. Lazarus goes through the pain of death, Mary and Martha go through the sadness of loss, not because Jesus doesn't love them, but precisely because he does.

[ 19 : 23 ] love that doesn't look like love at all. In their moment of grieving and in that moment of dying, it feels like Jesus must hate me.

Jesus must have abandoned us. It's love that doesn't look like love. And, and I'll just add this quickly, I'm not going to linger here for very long, he does a similar thing with the disciples as it relates to pain.

Look at verse 7. I'll go quick here. Then after this he said to the disciples, let us go to Judea again. And the disciples said to him, Rabbi, the Jews were just now seeking to stone you and you're going there again?

Hello! Like, how about not go? Right? All in favor not go. And like twelve hands go up. One doesn't, right? Jesus answered verse 9, and are there not twelve hours in the day?

If anyone walks in the day, he does not stumble because he sees the light of this world. But if anyone walks in the night, he stumbles because the light is not in him.

[ 20 : 38 ] And at this point the disciples are like, what's he talking about? We were saying, you might not want to go back because they're going to stone you. And he's like, you know it's still daylight out.

What's he talking about? After saying these things, he said to them, our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I go to awake him. By the way, the point earlier was, while Jesus is here, he is going to do the work he's been called to do.

While it is daylight, we are going to go. While the light of the world is here, we're going to go. Verse 12, the disciples said to him, Lord, if he's fallen asleep, he'll recover. He'll get better, right?

He'll cheer up. And Jesus had spoken of his death, but they thought that he meant he was rest and sleep. And then Jesus told them plainly, Lazarus has died, and for your sake I'm glad I was not there, so that you may believe, but let us go to him.

Now watch what Thomas says, verse 16, Thomas called the twins, said to the fellow disciples, let us also go, that we may die with him. In other words, Thomas believes they are walking into their very own death.

[ 21 : 50 ] Now here's my point, I'm not going to linger here other than to say, I think you see the same theme in these verses, namely, that just as Jesus purposes the pain of Lazarus, he also purposes the persecution of the disciples.

They have absolutely no interest whatsoever in going. Why would you go where they want to kill you? Thomas knows this, and Jesus says, listen, the time for ministry is now even if it costs.

So what's the first clear point? I think it's clear from the early verses of this passage, it's this, love purposes suffering. Love that purposes suffering.

Jesus loves Lazarus so much, he lets him die. And you say, and some of you feel this way right now. Be honest, some of you are saying, I don't like this side of Jesus. I don't like that Jesus does it this way.

I don't like to think about Jesus this way. And I've quoted this to you many times and now is an appropriate place to quote it again. It's a quote by J. Vernon McGee. He says, quote, this is God's universe.

[ 23 : 01 ] He does things his way. You may have a better way, but you don't have a universe. Amen? And he gets that response every time, right?

Because we all know that's true. We don't get the right to say, Jesus, you should do this a better way. Because this life isn't about our comfort, this life is about his glory.

And so love purposed suffering. It was love that sure didn't look like love. Now watch what love does next.

Pick it up in verse 17. Now when Jesus came, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days. Bethany was near Jerusalem about two miles off, and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them concerning their brother.

I mean, imagine the grief here. And Martha heard that Jesus was coming. She went and met him, but Mary remained seated in the house. Martha said to Jesus, Lord, I mean, just think about what's behind this.

[ 24 : 04 ] If you had been here, my brother would not have died. But even now I know that whatever you ask from God, God will give you. And Jesus said to her, your brother will rise again.

Martha said, I know he will rise. Let's stop there. Here's the second point, is that love not only purposes suffering, love now participates in suffering.

I want to show you something that I think is beautiful in this text. And it's like big time important truth about Jesus. First, let me just say here that what I mean is that Jesus not only purposes the suffering that they're going through, but what I want to show you is he now enters into their suffering.

He suffers with them and participates with them in that. Lazarus has been dead how long? Four days. and the family and friends, the text says, have all gathered to console the family.

Mary and Martha are all there and Jesus walks in the room. Now listen, how many of you have ever been in a situation where you knew when I walk through this door it's going to be awkward?

[ 25 : 15 ] How many of you show of hands have ever done that, right? When I sit down with them at Starbucks it's going to start awkwardly. Like you just know you're walking into a situation where every eyeball is going to be staring at you and that every whisper is going to be about you and you can almost feel the disappointment in the room.

You know what I'm talking about? That's the situation Jesus is walking into. Everybody there is looking at him like where were you? The audacity for you to show up now.

Is your watch broke? Should the disciples keep your calendar? You should have been here sooner. In fact John does not hide the emotions and I love that about the Bible.

It shows us the raw emotions that people have about Jesus. The first look at verse 20 it says so when Martha heard that Jesus was coming she went and met him but Mary remained seated in the house.

One response to Jesus here is distance. Mary stays in. One of the things you've heard me say this probably multiple times faith family is that suffering never leaves you neutral.

[ 26 : 34 ] Suffering never leaves you neutral. It either takes you to God or it takes you away from God. Suffering never leaves you neutral and in Mary's case she is distancing herself from Jesus.

Be real with me everybody right here some of you watching online some of you are very distant from God right now because of suffering in your life that you didn't understand and you thought now he says he loves me but this doesn't feel like love and you've grown distant in your relationship with Jesus.

That's one emotion that's seen here. Here's the second one in verse 21. Martha on the other hand says to Jesus Lord if you had been here my brother would not have died.

The second response is one of disappointment. Where were you? Jesus we needed you. We really needed you.

It's not a game and it's not a joke. My brother's dead. And I called for you and you were nowhere to be found.

[ 27 : 50 ] I'm really really disappointed that you weren't here on time. And some of you know what that's like. Some of you're disappointed with the way God does things.

Amen? I'll take off your mask. You know you are. There are some of you here tonight that are disappointed with Jesus. Because while he says he loves you it sure doesn't look like love.

Here's the third emotion or response we get and it's in verse 37. But some of them said could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man also have kept this man from dying?

So the third response we see is one of doubt. Is he really? Is he really who he says he is? I mean maybe he can do some things but he can't really do everything and there's doubt and questioning about him and some of you know what that's like.

You doubt and question whether or not God will really come through. Is that real or what faith? I mean I love that John includes those responses because Jesus has purposed the suffering and they are experiencing it in real time and the raw emotions that come from that but what I think is absolutely beautiful if you're still with me say yes is Jesus response to them is not who do you think you are questioning me?

[ 29 : 18 ] Do you know who I am? Do you know what I've done for you? Oh sure none of you had a problem when I was turning water into wine but the moment I don't fit into your calendar you're angry with me fine there are plenty of other families to go serve that's how I would have been tempted to respond amen and you would too but Jesus doesn't do that listen listen Jesus enters into their suffering he participates with them in their hurting and their grieving in other words Jesus suffers with them and I want to just show you quickly two ways that he suffers with them first Jesus enters into their suffering with words he speaks words of comfort to them you see this in verse 23 look at it Jesus said to her your brother will rise again and Martha said to him I know he'll rise again in the resurrection on the last day and Jesus said to her

I am the resurrection and the life whoever believes in me though he die yet he shall live listen listen everybody right here I need you to get this this is so important when Jesus says your brother will rise again and I am the resurrection and the life he is not giving her a theological treatment on the resurrection listen he is giving her comfort in himself that is not meant to debate theology in this moment Jesus is trying to enter into her grieving and comfort her in himself and so Jesus grieves with them and comforts them and gives them hope through words here is the second way he does it Jesus enters into their suffering with weeping and some of you know the shortest verse in the Bible is found here look at verse 33 it says that when

Jesus saw her weeping and the Jews who had come with her also weeping oh some of you need to hear this tonight he was deeply moved in his spirit and greatly troubled and he said where have you laid him and they said to him Lord come and see and Jesus wept and the Jews said see how he loved him I don't have a lot of time but there's something beautiful about Jesus here I mean there's something beautiful about Jesus period but I'm telling you that revealed in this text is something about Jesus that I think is absolutely beautiful I've always found it strange and some of you have heard me say this why Jesus wept when he knew that he was about to raise Lazarus from the dead I mean if there was ever a time of like just suck it up you babies I mean watch this like that could have been a response but that's not

Jesus response listen he does what Paul later says he weeps with those who weeps do you know how you're being like Jesus when others suffer you enter into their suffering with them and you not only give them words of comfort but you weep with them and I don't think we get both of those very well some of us are only words Romans 8 28 see you later that's not enough and others are weeping with you as a friend but they don't give you any comfort biblically or founded on truth here here's the beautiful thing I'm talking about you ready you ready here's the beautiful thing don't miss it notice it on the screen Jesus can grieve their pain while at the same time have a purpose for their pain Jesus can and does grieve their pain while at the same time purposing their pain

I think that's beautiful or let me say it a different way notice these on the! Jesus speaks truth sheds tears Jesus gives hope to you while hurting with you that's a beautiful picture of love amen that Jesus doesn't only purpose the suffering he participates in the suffering he enters in with them and suffers with them so we have seen these two things I trust faithfully from the text that love purposed suffering Jesus intentionally delayed his camel didn't break down he did this on purpose second when he got there he entered into their suffering with them with words and with weeping but there's still one problem Lazarus is still dead so watch what love does next verse 38 now we're to the miracle now you can start timing me verse 38 then

[ 34 : 34 ] Jesus deeply moved again came to the tomb it was a cave and the stone laid against it and Jesus said take away the stone and Martha the sister of the dead man said to him Lord by this time there will be an odor for he has been dead four days and Jesus said to her did I not tell you that if you believed you would see the glory of God I knew that you always hear me but I said this on account of the people standing around that they would believe that you sent me and when he had said these things he cried out with a loud voice Lazarus come out and the man who had died came out and his hands and feet were bound with linen stripes and his face wrapped with cloth and Jesus said to him unbind love purposed this suffering love participated entered into the suffering with them and now we see in this miracle that love has power over any suffering you could possibly go through amen

I mean this is as bad as it gets there is nothing greater than death and Jesus is showing you that not only did I purpose this and not only do I comfort in suffering I and I alone have the power to defeat suffering in its place Jesus tells them remove the stone no you don't understand he's been dead four days did I not tell you that you would see the glory of God in Jesus with a voice I think that

every time it speaks hell trembles says Lazarus come forth and out of the grave comes a dead man who has been given new life and I think Lazarus must have been something like this like what in the world just happened to me where am I and there stands a man who has been set free from death unbind him and let him go he of Jesus Christ and as if you needed another example you have another example that there is nothing impossible with him do you think Mary thought this was possible do you think Martha thought this was possible do you think the Jews around thought this was possible do you think lat who knows what Lazarus thought right but every one of them says I'm gonna have to wait until the resurrection day and Jesus is no we'll have resurrection day or at least a glimpse of it today Lazarus come out more than water to wine and more than healing of a sick son more than giving a blind man sight this miracle is a powerful miracle because it shows power over the grave which gets us to the meaning of the miracle why did Jesus do this miracle I think the answer is in verse 25 Jesus said to her I am the resurrection and the life whoever believes in me though he die yet shall he live and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die do you believe this here listen listen listen Jesus listen Jesus did this miracle not simply to give them hope in the moment Jesus did this miracle to give us hope for eternity okay he he did this miracle not just to give this family hope in the moment oh it did that but to give all of us hope for eternity why because miracles are what fill in the blank let's see if you pass the test miracles are starts with an s signs I knew you knew it all of you were saying it you all get a's miracles are signs they're pointing you to something bigger remember I've told you that it's not just the miracle itself it's what the miracle represents and what does this miracle represent let me let the apostle Paul share it with you and tell me that this doesn't image Lazarus's story Ephesians chapter 2 verse 1 and you that is you and I faith family were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked following the course of this world following the prince of the power of the air and the spirit that is now at work and the sons of disobedience you were dead verse 4 but God being rich in mercy because of the great love with which you loved us even when we were dead in our trespasses made us alive Lazarus together with Christ by grace you have been saved and he raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus so that in the coming ages he might show what he promised to do in John 11 the immeasurable riches of his grace and kindness towards us in Christ Jesus that is glorify him forever you think Lazarus's story glorifies God imagine how all of our salvation stories when brought together in eternity will glorify God forever and ever and ever why because we were impossible to be saved on our own and God did the impossible in our lives by saving us from death to life that's the sign this miracle is all about namely Lazarus's physical condition death is a sign of our spiritual condition death and notice this on the screen just like Jesus is the only way that could give Lazarus new life Jesus is the only one that can give you new life he is the only one and so tonight if you don't have spiritual life you need to look to Jesus by faith

Jesus throughout this passage says this is that you would believe I hope tonight you would believe this is the sign that Jesus performs so what does the text show us that love purposes suffering that's a hard one to get our minds around but then love comes along and participates in the suffering it's a beautiful thing about Jesus and then he shows us that love has power over our suffering and I close with one final thing that love does verse 24 Martha said to him I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day and Jesus said to her and this is not underlined in your Bible it should be I am the resurrection and the life in other words I close with this final point love is the person who suffered love doesn't just purpose suffering it doesn't just participate in our suffering it doesn't just have power over it but love actually is a person a person who knows suffering faith family when Jesus mentions the resurrection Martha thinks an event she thinks a day in the future she's thinking theologically and Jesus wants her to think personally that is that a res the resurrection is not a thing it's a person life life is not a thing it is a person and this entire episode with Lazarus is a foreshadowing of when Jesus will arrive not in Bethany but when he will arrive at Calvary and once again just like in John chapter 11 Jesus will come face to face with death and just like Lazarus Jesus will be laid in a tomb and like in John 11 there will be weeping and and wondering is this really the one and three days later a voice from heaven will say Jesus come forth and a body that lay dead for three days will start to twitch and eyes that were sealed with the crust of blood will open and a stone will be rolled away and out will walk a man not who was given new life but who is life this is what this entire miracle is pointing us to that this is about a person it's not about an event it's about an

I am the resurrection and the life and that faith family is love that is love but for three days it sure didn't look like love it didn't look like love at all it didn't look like love at all you see faith family if you think I hope you'll listen and I hope you'll listen closely if you think letting Lazarus die doesn't look like love imagine letting the son of God die if you think making Mary and Martha feel abandoned doesn't look like love imagine Jesus when he cries out my God why have you forsaken me and yet at the cross suffering was purposed suffering was purposed which makes us ask the question why would God purpose that pain and I leave you with two answers the first is love for God so loved the world he gave his only son

[ 45 : 43 ] Jesus just like Lazarus Jesus just like Lazarus was left to die because of love so that whenever it doesn't look like God loves you you can rest assured he does you can rest assured he does and the second reason that God purposed the suffering of the cross was glory you see Jesus's death just like Lazarus was so that the son of God would be glorified through it through it how because through it the father gave his son a name and it wasn't a name for which to hide in shame it was a name that every knee will bow and confess as Lord it was for the glory of the son of God and so if today like Martha like Lazarus

God's love doesn't feel like love to you then maybe you should view your life through the lens of a bloody cross and an empty tomb because if you do because if you do you might just walk away with a different point of view and all God's people said will you pray with me God I thank you for passages like this that make us rethink the way we define your love we know that you love us and all of us know what it's like to go through seasons where it sure doesn't feel like love but no one knows that more than Jesus for three days that looked like anything but love and yet God you so loved the world you gave your only begotten son that means there are gospel implications for how we think about our circumstances when we go through suffering in this life and it's easy to think that you've abandoned us that you've given up on us that you don't love us anymore

I pray that we would cling to the cross and know that Jesus because of the cross can enter into our suffering with us and remind us that yes we are most certainly loved deeply loved and may just remind us that our life doesn't exist for our comfort it exists for God's glory and I don't I don't know God what everybody's going through tonight I don't know the circumstances of every life in this room and those watching online but I am trusting that your spirit will now take your word the truth of tonight and comfort us with it in Jesus name Amen