

Delayed, But Not Denied

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Preacher: Pastor Caleb Howard

- [0 : 0 0] You're in a season of delay and you're wondering where Jesus is. I thought he was a faithful friend. I thought he was a friend that would stick closer than any brother.
- I thought he was a way maker. I thought he was a promise keeper. Come on, I thought he was the healer. I thought he was the liver. But where is he at in my situation? Where is he at in my dilemma, in my problem?
- Some of you are right there in that season of your life. But I come by to let you know that God has seen your tears. And he has heard your cries.
- He's got your address. He's got your number. And although it may look like he is absent, I want you to know he's going to show up right in the nick of time.
- As you all know, two Sundays ago, we celebrated the resurrection of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. And today we are going to look at another resurrection account.
- [1 : 0 1] This particular story is about a close friend of Jesus who had died. His name was none other than Lazarus. How many remembers the story of Lazarus in John chapter 11?
- So let's go ahead and dig right into it. Starting in verse 1 of John 11. And it says this. Now a certain man was sick.
- Lazarus of Bethany. The town of Mary and her sister Martha. It was that Mary who anointed the Lord with fragrant oil and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick.
- Therefore the sisters sent to him, saying, Lord, behold, he whom you love is sick. When Jesus heard that, he said, This sickness is not unto death, but it is for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified through it.
- Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. So when he heard that he was sick, he stayed two more days.
- [2 : 1 6] Somebody say two more days. In the place where he was. Verse 7. Then after this, he said to his disciples, Let us go up to Judea again.
- Now notice the Bible paints a very clear picture that Lazarus was not just a friend of Jesus, not just an acquaintance of Jesus, but Lazarus was in fact a very close friend of Christ.
- So was his two sisters, Mary and Martha. And the scriptures tell us in this account that Lazarus had fell sick. We don't know exactly what the sickness was, but it was a very deathly sickness.
- He was on his deathbed literally. And the sisters, Mary and Martha, call out to their friend, Jesus, and notifies him that his friend, Lazarus, is on the deathbed.
- He is sick and we need you. We need you, Jesus. We know you are able to do all things. We know that you are able to do that which is impossible.

[3 : 19] We know that you are able to bring healing to your friend. And so they call out for Jesus. And wouldn't you think that the appropriate response of Jesus, it would be to put down whatever he was doing and to make it there to see his friend and to bring healing to his friend.

Wouldn't that be what most of us would do in this place today? If your close friend was sick and was in need of you, would you not be willing to lay down everything to go check on your friend and to bring the answer that your friend needs?

But Jesus did not do exactly that. But the Bible says in verse 6 again, it says, So when he heard, when Jesus heard that his friend Lazarus was sick, he didn't rush to see him.

It says that he stayed two more days in the place where he was. He delayed his coming. He delayed his arrival.

Can I tell you today that even when it doesn't make sense, you've got to make up in your mind that you're going to trust him. Did you hear what I said? I said, even when it does not make sense, you've got to make up in your mind, in your heart, and in your spirit that you are going to trust him.

[4 : 44] See, there's some of you. I know I'm talking to some of you in this place today. There's some of you. You're in a season and in a situation in your life that it does not make sense. It doesn't add up. Do the math.

It doesn't add up. You're in a perplexing situation. You're in a season of delay, and you're wondering where Jesus is. I thought he was a faithful friend.

I thought he was a friend that would stick closer than any brother. I thought he was a way maker. I thought he was a promise keeper. Come on, I thought he was the healer. I thought he was the deliverer.

But where is he at in my situation? Where is he at in my dilemma, in my problem? Some of you are right there in that season of your life.

But I come by to let you know that God has seen your tears, and he has heard your cries. He's got your address. He's got your number.

[5 : 39] And although it may look like he is absent, I want you to know he's going to show up right in the nick of time. Anybody believe that?

Well, you shout amen. I said even when it doesn't make sense, you've got to develop the mindset and the mentality that I'm going to trust him. You see, the delay is a setup to demonstrate God's divine and supernatural power.

Did you hear what I said? The delay is not going to be wasted. This season of delay that you are experiencing in your life, it is not going to be wasted.

Somebody look at your neighbor and say, God doesn't waste anything. The Bible says very clearly that all things work together for the good to those who love the Lord and are called according to him.

I'm telling you, the good, the bad, the ugly, the nasty, God said, I'm working it together for your good and for my glory. This season of delay shall not be wasted.

[6 : 44] For it is just a divine setup to demonstrate God's divine and supernatural power. I want to give you this morning four reasons on why we oftentimes experience the pain and disappointment of delay.

Four reasons of why we oftentimes experience the pain and the disappointment of delay. We find the first reason took away right here in verse four that we read just a moment ago.

Let's go back to verse four in John 11. And it says this, when Jesus heard that his friend Lazarus was sick, this is what he said to his disciples. He said, this sickness is not unto death, but it will be for what?

The glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified through it. So what is the first reason of why sometimes we experience the pain and disappointment of delay?

Number one is so that the Father will be glorified. Did you hear what I said today? The reason why you are experiencing this season of delay in your life, it is not for your demise, it is not for your destruction, but it is for the sole purpose that it will bring glory to the Father.

[8 : 11] Did you hear what I said? That it will bring glory to the God that you have served and that you have committed your life to. That the Father may be glorified.

That he may receive the fullness of glory. That the Father may receive a complete glory. You see, oftentimes people are questioning. They're going throughout their life aimlessly questioning, what is it that God has put me on this earth for?

What is my calling? What is my purpose? You know, what is the reason of my existence? Let me help you out with that answer today. It's not profound. It's not perplexing.

But we are called. This is your calling. This is your reason of existence. We are called to give and to bring glory to God. You didn't hear what I said today.

I said you were put on this earth. You were put right here in the upstate of South Carolina. Your calling, your purpose, your reason for existence is to bring glory to your God.

[9 : 14] It is to give glory to your God. It is to bring glory to your God. I'm telling you, the reason why you are in the season of delay in your life, it is to bring glory to your creator.

It is to bring glory to your savior. It is to bring glory to the one who established your going. It is to bring glory to the Father. We are called to give and to bring glory to God.

How do I know that? 1 Corinthians 10 31 says this, Therefore, whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all to the glory of God.

Whatever it is that you put your hands to, do it all for the glory of God. See, some of you need to realize that you're not working for your employer. That's why some of you are sloppy in your workplace because you think you're working for this loud-mouthed man or woman that's always bashing you and lording over you.

No, everything that you do, you do it as unto the Lord. Whether you eat, whether you drink, whatever you do, you do it all for the glory of God.

[10 : 18] Colossians 3 17 says, And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

1 Peter 4 11 says, If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracle of God. If anyone ministers, let him do it as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever.

Amen. I said the reason why you are in a season of delay in your life, it is not for your demise, it is not for your destruction, but it is to bring glory to God.

It is to bring a complete glory, a fullness of glory to Father God in your life. We are called to give and to bring glory to God.

What's the second reason why we oftentimes experience the pain and the disappointment of delay? Let's go on down in this account to verse 14 for the sake of time. It says this, Then Jesus said to them plainly, to his disciples, he said, Lazarus is dead.

[11 : 30] Now, wait a minute. A while ago in verse 4, he said this sickness will not be unto death. But because of his delay in his arrival to checking on his friend, we now receive the news that Lazarus is in fact dead.

Verse 15, look at this. Jesus said, I am glad for your sakes that I wasn't there. For your sake that I wasn't there. That you may, what?

Believe. Nevertheless, let us now go to him. So why oftentimes do we experience the pain and the disappointment of delay?

Not only that the Father may be glorified, but also secondly to increase our faith. To expand our faith.

To grow our faith. To stretch our faith. And to mature our faith. Romans chapter 1 verse 17 says it like this.

[12 : 37] For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith. As it is written, the just shall live by faith.

Do you realize that God has called you to walk by faith? To live by faith? In other words, when you don't see it, you still believe.

When you don't hear it, you still believe. When you don't feel it, you still believe. You want to know what some of our problem is today? We are moved by our emotions. Let me go ahead and help somebody today.

Your emotions are real. Your emotions are valid. God made us to be emotional beings. I'm not knocking your emotions. We all are emotional. God created us to be that way.

But you cannot live your life based upon your emotions or your feelings. Because as sure as you do, no wonder you're depressed. No wonder you're fearful.

[13 : 38] No wonder you have anxiety. Because you're going around living your life by your feelings and your emotions. Let me tell you, I'm not moved by what I see. I'm not moved by what I hear.

I'm not moved by what I feel. I'm only moved by the unshakable word of God. What God said, that's what I'm rooted on. What God has said and established, that's what I build my life upon.

I know the doctor said you have a sickness that is unto death. But I know what the Bible says. By his stripes, I am healed. I know that the lawyer has said you're going to face bankruptcy.

But I know what my Bible says. That I've never seen the righteous forsaken nor a seed begging for bread. I know that others are saying they counted you out. You've done too much.

But I know what my Bible says. I've got an advocate with the Father. And if I confess my sins to him, he's faithful and just to forgive me of my transgressions.

[14 : 43] I said the reason why you are experiencing this season of delay is to increase your faith. To expand it, to grow it, to stretch it, to mature it. You see, God's getting ready to take some of you from going from a faith to see the sick healed.

To a faith to seeing the dead brought back to life again. Did you hear what I said? God is a healer. I've seen you. You don't come too late to tell me he doesn't heal.

I've seen him heal. I've seen him heal cancer. I've seen him heal diabetes. I've seen him heal headaches. I've seen him heal all sorts of things. But let me tell you, in this season of delay, God said I'm about to mature your faith.

I'm about to expand your faith. That you will not just believe that I am a healer. But that you will believe that I've come to bring those things that are dead back to life again.

I'm telling you, he's a resurrecting God. People say it's over with. They say there's no hope. They say, you know, you might as well just throw in the towel now.

[15 : 53] You done done too much. You done been to too many places. People done marked you out. They judged you and they condemned you in the church. When you came down to the altar, they said it won't last long.

We know the track record. Let me tell you today, in this season of delay, as painful and discouraging and disappointing as it is, God said, I'll never leave you.

I'll never forsake you. But I'll go with you to the very end of the world. He said, I'm married to the backslider. I want you to know he's a loyal God. God. He's a faithful God.

And I want you to know he's not going to abandon you as his child. But he's going to increase your faith. That you will believe that he not only can heal, but that he can bring those dead things back to life again.

I'm telling you what, I feel the wind of God in this place blowing. And God's breathing on dead situations. God's breathing on dead relationships. God's breathing on dead things, dead dreams, and dead visions.

[16 : 54] And he said, it shall not die, but it shall live. And you will declare the goodness of the Lord. I said, it's to increase your faith. Let's go on down to verse 17.

It says, so when Jesus came, he finally showed up. He found that he had already been in the tomb for how many days? Four days.

Now, Bethany was near Jerusalem, about two miles away. And many of the Jews had joined the women around Martha and Mary to comfort them concerning their brother.

Then Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met him. But Mary was sitting in the house. Now, Martha said to Jesus, Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.

I mean, she just spoke straight truth, did she not? She didn't sugarcoat it. She said, Jesus, if you would have showed up four days ago, he wouldn't be dead. But because you delayed your coming, my brother's now dead.

[17 : 57] How many knows you can be honest to God? Because he knows your heart anyways. See, some of y'all, y'all trying to play patty cake with God. Y'all trying to be cute and super spiritual with God. Let me tell you, some of the conversations I have with God will blow your mind.

Come on. You might as well be real because he knows your heart. Amen? Verse 22. It says, but even now I know that whatever you ask of God, her faith's starting to rise back up.

God will give you. And Jesus said unto her, your brother will rise again. Martha said to him, I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at that last day.

And Jesus said unto her, what did he say? He said, I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me, though he may die, he shall live.

Let's go down to verse 32. Then when Mary came where Jesus was, here's the other sister showing up, and saw him, she fell down at his feet saying to him, Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.

[19 : 01] Here we are starting back over, right? Therefore, when Jesus saw her weeping and the Jews who came with her weeping, he groaned in the spirit. And he was troubled. Verse 34.

And he said, where have you laid him? And they said to him, Lord, come and see. Now look at verse 35, the shortest verse in the entirety of the Bible.

Two words. Pay close attention. Jesus wept. See, you're not the only one crying.

You're not the only one that's disgruntled. You're not the only one that's in pain. You're not the only one that's discouraged. Let me tell you, we have a God that is moved with compassion.

He's not a God that's far off in the eons of eternity, but he's a very present help in your time of trouble. He's closer than the very breath that you breathe in and out of your lungs.

[20 : 02] My Bible says that Jesus wept. And it goes on, says, then the Jews said, see how he loved him. And some of them said, could not this man who opened the eyes of the blind also have kept this man from dying?

What am I saying to you? This is a beautiful depiction of the humanity of Jesus. See, oftentimes when we think of God, when we think of Jesus, you know, we think of him as an eternal being.

And yes, yes, he's all of that. He's omnipresent. He's omnipotent. He's omniscient. He's the king of glory. He sits on the throne of heaven. The Bible says the earth is his footstool.

He's great and greatly to be praised. He's mighty. He's all powerful. He's all of that and so much more. But let me tell you, he's not so big that he cannot be moved by your individual crisis or circumstance.

Did you hear what I said? He's not so big that he's not touchable. He's not so big that he doesn't know what you are going through in your own personal and individual life.

[21 : 07] Let me tell you, God knows exactly where you're at. He knows exactly what you're going through. He knows the doubt. He knows the discouragement. He knows the fear. He knows the anxiety.

And my Bible says that Jesus is moved with compassion for you and your circumstance. This is a beautiful depiction of the humanity of Jesus.

He was 100% God yet 100% man. His heart broke because of the death of his friend, because of the agony of Mary and Martha. See, sometimes you have to learn to trust his heart when you cannot see his hand.

Did you hear what I said? Don't you know Martha and Mary was discouraged? They called on their friend to come and he waited four days to come. Their brother's dead.

Four days, stinking by now in the tomb. Don't you know they were despondent? Don't you know they were discouraged? Don't you know they were depressed? Because their friend, their close friend and confident did not show up.

[22 : 14] You see, that's when you have to trust the heart of God. Even when you don't see his hand. They was after his hand because they knew in his hand flowed healing virtue.

They knew if they could get Jesus to show up and Jesus laid his hands or spoke a word that it would bring healing, supernatural, powerful healing to their brother Lazarus.

But Jesus did not show up. He did not lay his hands on him at that time and at that moment. That's when you have to trust the heart of God.

And that's when you have to come to the realization that he is God and you are not. See, I realized that a long time ago.

That his ways are higher than my ways. His thoughts are greater than my thoughts. See, the moment you think you got God figured out, let me tell you, you don't. I come to bring news to you.

[23 : 10] You can't figure our God out. If you could figure God out in his ways, then he wouldn't be God at all. I come by to let somebody know today it's time for you to realize that he's God and you are not.

I know you would have did it this way. I know you would have showed up in this time frame. But let me tell you, God is not limited by our time frame. God is not limited by our thoughts and our opinions of how we think things should be.

See, some of y'all are trying to command God to do certain things. You don't command the king of glory. He commands you. Well, God, if you'll do this and you'll do that. Some of you think you've got all of this power.

You've got power. But let me tell you, you don't have enough power to command what King Jesus is going to do and when he's going to do it and how he's going to do it. He is God all by himself.

And he will do what he sees fit to do. And he will do it in the time frame that he sees fit to do it in. You've got to trust his heart even when you cannot see his hands.

[24 : 12] Let's go down to verse 38. It says, Then Jesus again groaning in himself came to the tomb. It was a cave and a stone lay against it. And Jesus said, Take away the stone.

Martha, the sister of him who was dead, said to him, Lord, by this time there's a stench, for he has been dead for four days. Jesus said to her, Look at this. This is the third point of why we experience the pain and the disappointment of delay.

Verse 40. Jesus said to her, Did I not say to you that if you would believe, you would see the glory of God?

Why are you in a season of delay? Could it not be that God is setting you up to see and to experience a greater manifestation of his glory and his power?

Did you hear what I said? Besides you whining and groaning and murmuring and complaining about why you're going through what you're going through, why you're facing what you're facing, so many people, I've never seen it, Melissa, so many people with this victim mindset and mentality.

[25 : 23] Why am I going through this? It's unjust. It's inhumane. It's unfair. Let me tell you what. Get over yourself. Trouble troubles us all in one way or the other.

Your trouble may not be my trouble and vice versa. But let me tell you again, God will not waste anything that you are going through. And the reason why you find yourself in a season of delay, again, it's not for your destruction.

It's not for your demise. But it is a setup that you are about to experience a greater manifestation of God's glory and of his power.

Romans chapter 8 and verse 18 says, For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with what?

With the glory which shall be revealed in us. What is it that you're facing? What is it that you're going through? I know it hurts.

[26 : 23] I know it's disappointing. I know it's painful. But I promise you it's going to pale in comparison to the glory that's about to hit you, that's about to show up on your behalf.

I'm telling you, this is a divine setup. God's about to allow you to experience a greater manifestation of his glory and of his power.

You see, sometimes we are too quick, listen, to settle for good things. When God has greater things in store for us.

Did you hear what I said? I said, sometimes we are too quick as people of God, as the church of Jesus Christ, to settle for good things.

When God said, I've got so much more for you. God says, I'm about to blow your mind. Eyes have not seen, nor ears heard, what our God has prepared for them who love him, and who are called according to his purpose.

[27 : 24] Honey, that's talking more about the sweet by and by. That's talking more than about heaven, as wonderful as that's going to be. But I'm telling you, I want my slice of pie right here and right now.

I'm not waiting on that land. I want heaven right here and right now. My Bible says that we can call unto the Lord, and we can ask that God will show up in our dimension, in our time frame, that those things that are in heaven shall be upon earth.

I'm telling you, it's not over, God says it's over. This is a divine setup. He's about to show you his power, his glory, in a way that he could not have shown you.

Unless you experience this season of delay, don't just settle for what is seemingly good, but wait on the greater things that God has prepared for you.

You see, this delay will reveal a greater glory. How many believes that? I said it's about to reveal a greater glory. Let's go on. Verse 41, Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead man was lying, and Jesus lifted up his eyes and said, Father, I thank you that you have heard me, and I know that you always hear me.

[28 : 45] Look at this. This is the fourth and final point, as the praise team is coming back up, of why we experience the pain and the disappointment of delay. He said in verse 42, And I know that you always hear me, but because of the people who are standing by, I said this, that they may believe that you sent me.

Why did he delay his arrival? He said, Because I know who's going to be gathered around mourning and weeping and crying, murmuring and complaining, backbiting, backstabbing.

He said, I know the multitudes that are going to be gathered. See, if he would have come immediately, dropped everything that he did, and he would have just laid his hands and brought healing to Lazarus, that Lazarus may not have died, probably only a handful of people would have experienced that miracle.

But because he delayed his coming, and because he allowed Lazarus to die, and he died for four days, the Bible says, multitudes of people gathered in that land, in that community, in that region, to mourn the death of the great Lazarus.

You see, he's about people. And you see, the church should be about people. Ministry is about people. It's not about making a name for yourself. It's not about seeing your name and highlight it in the spotlight.

[30 : 08] It's not about building our own man-made kingdoms and traditions and denominations. Ministry is all about people. Jesus came for people. And the reason why you are experiencing pain and disappointment in your season of delay, I promise you, it is to prepare before you a greater platform.

Somebody say a greater platform of influence. Somebody say of influence. That multitudes of people will be impacted. There's a purpose.

There's a reason why you have experienced delay. There's a reason why God didn't show up like you thought he was going to show up. There's a reason why he didn't come in your time frame like you thought he was going to come.

There's a reason why you are experiencing delay. And it is for the sake of people. Because I promise you, whether you realize it or not, people are looking at you. People are watching you.

People know you. And I want you to know, God said, in this season of delay, I'm preparing before you a greater platform of influence. That you're not only going to touch you and your four and no more, but you're about to touch a multitude of people.

[31 : 15] Your testimony is about to go into the ears of multitudes of people, of what God has done for you, how he's healed you, how he's delivered you. You see, God won't waste one ounce of anything that's happened in your life, but he's about to put somebody on a greater platform that you can stand up and you can declare the goodness of God in your life, that others will come and know who Jesus Christ really is.

If you believe that, stand to your feet all over this place. Thank you. Thank you.