

How Saints Deal with Sickness!

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[0 : 00] This message was recorded at Vision Baptist Church in Alpharetta, Georgia. This is the next message in our series on the book of John, entitled, Jesus is God.

Amen. Nothing too hard for our God. Take your Bible if you would, and open it to John chapter 11. John chapter 11, and we're going to look at a very special passage and a very special question to answer.

When I was eight years old, my sister was six, and there were four of us. I guess my youngest sister would have been two, and then my young brother would have been, what, four?

And so eight, six, four, and two, something like that. We all got the measles. We all got the measles, and we were all, of course, there's a country house, outdoor bathroom, and all the stuff.

And my sister, Felicia, hers developed into some kind of thing that caused her fever to run up to somewhere around 107, 108. Stayed there for days. She was in a coma for like 10 days.

[1 : 09] Before that day, she was a natural, normal little girl running around healthy and mentally healthy and everything else. And 10 days later, when she came out of the coma, she did not know who my mother was.

She could still talk. And she looked at my mother and said, why are you wearing my mother's dress? And she had to be taught how to, she had to be potty trained again. She had to be taught how to do everything again.

I personally taught her how to read and write. I was often embarrassed about having to always run around with a girl that everybody looked at. And, you know, sometimes you want to know why sickness happens.

Why does sickness happen? Had a secretary in the first church I started in America. And we were, I don't know how she arrived at our church. I guess they arrived in town.

Found it there was an independent church. And she showed up at our church. And she had been working at a factory. She thinks maybe it was chemicals. And she developed a disease called scleroderma. And it started off as red patches on her skin.

[2 : 13] And by the time I left there, she would come in every now and then. There would be articles in magazines that they would make fun of people like her. And because of how horrible it made them look.

Her skin stretched extremely tight. All of the cartilage in her body slowly disappeared. Her jaw dropped back probably an inch below her top gums.

Her teeth were showing because her skin all shrunk up. Her hands shrunk till her fingers were about out to your first knuckle. She was always in constant pain.

About every six weeks she had to go to a doctor and actually be reamed out. They would run this thing down her esophagus. And they would have to widen so she could get food into her system.

When she talked, it was hard to understand her. And she came to work for me as a volunteer secretary. I said one day, I sure wish we had a secretary here. I said, we don't have enough money, but maybe somebody would volunteer.

[3 : 08] And she came in with those little nubby hands. Her chin all the way back. Her skin, all the elasticity gone. They call it a disease where people turn to stone.

She said, I'd be your secretary if you'd let me. I'll even answer the phone, but I'm not sure how people will understand me. And she worked for me for the next several years. I was from everything. I would walk in and she would tell Betty to send my suits when they had to go to the cleaners.

Literally everything she did. Why in the world do people get sick? Why does that happen to such good people? Why is my sister, when Betty and I got married, my mother told me to go out on the back porch and talk to my sister.

And she was sitting on the porch crying. And I was 18 and so she would have been about 16. And I went out and sat down beside her and I said, why are you crying and what's wrong? And she said, I always thought you'd marry me.

I never thought you'd marry somebody else. That's about where her mental level was. Why does that happen? You ever ask yourself that? Well, in this story that you're about to read in the Bible, in this story you're about to read in the Bible, Lazarus gets sick.

[4 : 15] And if anybody knows Jesus, it's Martha and Mary and Lazarus. They are connected. If anybody ought to get Jesus to help, if Jesus will come running to anybody, he'll come to them.

The fact is they send message to Jesus and they say, tell him the guy you love is sick. They didn't say the guy that loves you. They said the guy you love, you love Lazarus and Lazarus is sick.

Please come. Jesus knew full well what was going on. Because if you remember, Jesus is God. He knew exactly where Lazarus was. He knew exactly what Lazarus was going through.

And when he got the message, he said, I'm going to wait two more days before I head home. And after two days, his statement was, let's go to Judea. His statement wasn't, let's go see Lazarus.

He said, let's go to Judea. And by now you've got to imagine that the family's beginning to wonder, where's Jesus and why isn't he showing up? And why isn't he helping us? And why doesn't he come?

[5 : 15] And if you read the whole story, you know that when he gets there, Martha's out there and she basically says, if you'd have been here, he wouldn't have died. Why didn't you come?

Have you ever thought that? You ever had a family member think that? Can you imagine what it's like when your sister is retarded and crippled up and all the things that go on?

And you want to know why God, why don't you come through? Well, here's a story that can give us a little glimpse about how saints deal with sickness. Read with me, if you would, John chapter 11, verse 1, and we'll see how far we can get.

Look at what it says in verse 1. Now, a certain man was sick, named Lazarus of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha.

It was that Mary which anointed the Lord with ointment and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick. Therefore his sister said unto him, saying, Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick.

[6 : 17] When Jesus heard that, he said, this sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby. Now, Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus.

And when he, that's an interesting sentence right there. We keep preaching on it. Would you notice who he put first? He put the lady that was rushing around that he kind of scolded and he put her first. Even when he, even though he'd fussed at her and said, why don't you choose the better part?

Why are you always running around? And Mary sat down here and listened at my feet. And maybe you thought Jesus was upset with her. But when he wrote, when he, when he, it says, now Jesus loved Martha and her sister. Doesn't even call Mary's name.

I think that's kind of interesting. That's a whole nother message. Now, Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. Now, when he had heard, therefore, that he was sick, look at this. He abode two days still in the same place where he was.

Then after that said he to his disciples, let us go into Judea again. His disciples said to him, master, the Jews of late sought to stone thee and goest thou thither again. Jesus answered, are there not 12 days, 12 hours in the day?

[7 : 24] If any man walk in the day, he stumbleth not because he see it, the light of this world. But if a man walk in the night, he stumbleth because there's no light in him. These things said he, after that, he had said unto them, our friend Lazarus sleepeth, but I go that I may awake him out of sleep.

Then said his disciples, well, Lord, if he's asleep, that's pretty good. He's doing all right. He's just asleep. That sounds good. Fine. Don't need to wake him up.

Jesus. Jesus said, I'm speaking about his death. But they thought he was talking about him taking rest and sleep. Verse 14, then said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead.

Well, watch this sentence. And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there to the intent you may believe.

Well, you ought to circle that to the intent. He's not really glad he died, but he's not sad he died. It's okay. It was worth it. We'll figure that out Sunday morning, Lord. We'll see what Jesus thinks of death.

[8 : 30] To the intent you may believe. Nevertheless, let us go unto him. Then said Thomas, which is called Didymus, unto his fellow disciples, let us also go that we may die with him.

I love this guy's sweet spirit, don't you? Father, I pray now that you would touch our hearts and touch down deep where we hurt. There are people in our church that also have family members that are hurting and they've lost loved ones and they've wondered why you didn't come.

And the world has told them that it's a waste of time to pray to you. And I just pray that through this passage of scripture, you might help us and strengthen us and help us to leave here knowing how saints deal with sickness.

And I'll give you praise for all that you do. In Jesus' precious name. Amen. I want you to go to verse three and I want you to write this down. Jesus loved Lazarus. Jesus loved Lazarus.

Look at verse three. Therefore, his sister sent unto him and saying, Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick. Now, before I start kind of developing that for you just a second, could I just say to you, would you look this way?

[9 : 35] Say, let me see your eyeballs. You realize what you think? You think if somebody's sick, he must not love us. You think if things are going wrong, he must not love us. You think that if things aren't working out right and your business isn't going well and God's not answering your prayers, maybe he doesn't love me.

Well, in this story, which is holy scripture, no mistakes and no errors and written by the Holy Spirit of God, the Bible said the guy that you love.

It didn't say the guy that loves you. Because we could say, I love you. I just don't know why you don't love me. But in the scripture, it says, no, the guy you love is sick. I just want you to get that clear. So Jesus loves us.

Can we say amen? And by the end of this story, by the end of this story, we're going to get to this story. We're going to find out he knew exactly what he was doing the whole time. I mean, God knows what he's doing or Jesus knows what he's doing.

Did I say God when I meant Jesus? Oh, I guess I can, can't I? But anyway, Jesus said, Jesus said, Jesus said, knew exactly what was going on. The Holy Spirit makes it clear that what is about to happen in Lazarus's life is clearly not because God is angry or upset.

[10 : 48] God is not angry. God is not upset. The health, wealth and prosperity preachers have tried to make us believe that God always wants us to prosper. And so sickness is from the devil.

Simply not true. And this story is well proof of it. And you'll see that before it's over. We do not believe in the health, wealth and prosperity gospel. Fact is, we don't believe in positive thinking.

We believe in faith thinking. We believe that God will take care of us. That God will answer prayers. And it's not how much I can say a lot of positive things. Verse, the next thing.

They want you to believe that the reason you're sick is because you're not spiritual, but you are sinful. They would tell you you're sick because you're sinful and you're not spiritual.

They want you to think that if you had enough faith, then you wouldn't be sick and you wouldn't be prospering. Or that you wouldn't be sick and you would be prospering. They want you to believe.

[11 : 43] If they fill up stadiums telling people, hey, if you'll think the right things and God loves you and you believe the right things and you have enough faith, everything's going to get right. Fact is, if it's all as good as they say it would, there wouldn't be anybody ever dying because the whole time you'd never get sick.

You'd never get old. You'd never get wrinkled. I mean, everything would go good. But it ain't been working even for their own leaders. Say amen. I've been watching them a long time and they've been dying ever since I've been around. So I guess the rest of them will too.

The sisters knew the relationship Lazarus had with Jesus and they had no doubt that there was a special love there. Lazarus is not sick because of any sin or a lack of favor with Jesus.

Jesus is not upset with him. You might take home this. Jesus loves you. He loves you so much. He loved you when you were already a sinner, when you were still a sinner and he knew you were a sinner.

He didn't save you when you got good enough. He saved you when you were bad and you couldn't get good enough. That ought to help you. Because some of you are wondering, why doesn't God answer my prayer? You're asking God to meet a need.

[12 : 46] There are special things you're hurting about. And you're wondering, why doesn't God meet my need? And you think maybe he doesn't love you and the devil would help you fall away from God. But Lazarus, God does love him and there's going to be an answer.

The second thing I wish you'd write down is there are greater purposes. There are greater purposes than what happens to us. See, we focus on it from our side of the fence.

We focus on it from the bottom side and we don't know what God is doing. Verse 4, the Bible said, when Jesus heard that, he said, oh my goodness, Lazarus is sick.

This is horrible. God is angry. Let me go see if I can talk God out of being mad at him. Is that what it says in your Bible? Would you read with me in verse 4? When Jesus heard that, he said, oh, this sickness is not unto death, but to the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby.

So Jesus said, hey, oh, Lazarus is sick. Don't worry, guys. It's not to death. It's to the glory of Jesus. Now, he's going to die.

[13 : 54] And Jesus still said it wasn't to death because, you see, death isn't dying in his account because when he gets there, he just wakes death back up. Say amen. He's bigger than that. And I just want you to realize that there was a purpose far bigger.

I'm sure Martha and Mary, Lazarus, the sickness he has right here is a dying sickness. They knew he didn't just have a sniffles. He doesn't just have the flu. He doesn't just have a cold. He just doesn't have diarrhea.

He's dying and they know it. They didn't send to get Jesus because everything was going to be all right. They didn't send to get Jesus so he could say, take an aspirin and wait nine days and this will pass too. They knew he's in trouble.

And Jesus said, I know. And I'm going to get glory out of this. Now, there's something big I ought to learn about that. I ought to learn that there's something going on in my life that's far bigger about me and my family and what's happening in us.

There's something far bigger. Look what the Bible would say to us. Lazarus' sickness did not surprise Jesus. Why don't you write that down? It did not surprise Jesus. He knew exactly what was going on.

[14 : 57] Would you write that down? It didn't surprise Jesus. I mean, read the verse. When Jesus heard that, he said, this sickness is not unto death. He didn't go, oh, I didn't know. Wow.

He's sick. That's not what happened at all. He said, hey, don't worry about it. This sickness is not unto death. It's going to bring glory to the father. There was a greater purpose than the comfort of Lazarus and his sisters.

Before I keep giving you some thoughts I have, I'd just like to ask you a question. Do you reckon he knows you have the problem you have? Do you reckon he knows the mess you're going through? Do you reckon it surprises him that the prayers you're praying aren't getting answered?

Do you reckon he's up in heaven saying, man, I never knew that passport wasn't going to make it. Angels, y'all messed up on that one. Next time, let's get the detail working better. Or do you think up in heaven, he's like, oh, I know exactly what's going on here.

It didn't surprise him. The old country preacher said, did it ever dawn on you that nothing ever dawned on him? There was a greater purpose in the comfort of Lazarus.

[15 : 59] We must get our eyes off of ourselves and our circumstances to see what God's purpose is in our life. You are not an accident. You are not an accident.

We can't really tell what's happening in the middle of the problem. We can't figure out what's going on while all of it's happening. But when you, if you love Jesus and you keep serving him, you'll look back and you'll see tragedies that happened in your life.

And you will think to yourself, I had no idea what he was doing, but it sure worked out nice. I was going to tell this later. I'll just tell it now. I watched my son.

I watched my son and his wife have broken hearts because they couldn't have children. Andrea would lay her head on Chris chest and cry for eight or nine years because they didn't have children.

They begged God for children. Andrea used to say to Chris, how come they get other people who get in the backseat of a car and get pregnant? And they're living unholy lives and we're living holy lives and God doesn't want to give us a child.

- [16 : 58] I don't get it. But all the time there was a little boy named Jacob and a little girl named Hannah and God knew exactly where they were. And he knew they were going to make the absolute most perfect, wonderful grandkids that God could ever give a guy.
- And he knew that the mama would kill herself three weeks after Hannah was born. And he knew they were going to need a godly home. And he knew exactly what was happening.
- And then Chris and him called up and they said, finally, they got to the point. They said, we're never going to have children. Let's please, God, would you please do something to let us adopt a child then? And they called up to adopt a child.
- And when they called up to adopt a child, they had no idea what color. They had no idea what kind of health circumstances. They had no idea about anything. And the person said, I'm sorry, we don't have one, but we do have two.
- Would you start with two? They're brother and sister. And they said, we'll take them. I still remember the phone call when they told her they weren't going to get them. And then they told them that Jacob was in the hospital with severe respiratory problems.
- [17 : 58] And Andrea was dying because she felt like her child was sick and she'd never seen him yet. And then they brought him home. And all I can say is, I sure thank God for those eight or nine years.
- You know what? When the prayers got up to heaven and Andrea said, oh God, please give me a child. Jesus said, Jesus said, this ain't unto death. I know what I'm doing.
- This is going to bring glory to God someday. Look, if you would, look, if you would, when we, why do we get sick and have troubles and have things that not work out like we want or expect?
- Because we've got to get our eyes off of it. We'll give you ourselves and where we are. I'm going to give you some verses here. The first reason mentioned here is that God is going to get glory for Jesus.
- God is going to get glory for Jesus. Would you go back to verse four and look at it again? You see what Lazarus has no idea is going to happen. What, what Mary and Martha have no idea what's going to happen.
- [18 : 53] And while they're praying and feeling abandoned and this person who stays in her home and this person who they know has great power and this person who could make a difference. They know he could do it. They know he could rescue Lazarus.
- They have no idea that God is working out a plan that in just a few days is going to bring great glory to God. It isn't going to be that he heals somebody sick like he's done. He's not going to be that he raised somebody from the dead who's on their way to the graveyard.
- He's going to call a dead guy out of the grave four days after he's been buried. And everybody's going to be like, hey, we've seen miracles, but we ain't never seen one like that one. Jesus is going to get glory.
- That's the first thing that's going to happen. That's what was happening. Read the verse for me again. When Jesus heard that, he said, this sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the son of God might be glorified thereby.
- They will see Jesus raise a man that's been dead four days. They will know and believe more than ever about who he is. Look with me, if you would, in Isaiah chapter 55, verse 8 and 9. And this is where you're going to have to accept that he is bigger than you and trust him.
- [19 : 55] You're going to have to really believe that God is God. God, capital G, capital O, capital D. You're going to have to believe that God is capital K, capital I, capital N, capital G, king.

You're going to have to believe that God is Lord. You're going to have to believe that he is complete control and there's nothing shocking to him and nothing surprising. Look at what it says in Isaiah 55, 8 and 9, if you would. For my thoughts are not your thoughts, and neither are your ways my ways, says the Lord.

For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts. You know, we don't want to hear that. I am sure that Martha's walking around the house. I mean, Martha is a get-it-done woman.

Mary might meditate, Mary might pray, but bless God, Martha will pray while she's cleaning the wounds. Martha will pray while she's washing the dishes. Martha's working her backside off.

And Martha, I can see her pacing before there's nothing she knew. If he'd come, I don't know why he isn't here yet. If he'd just get here. If he'd get here, he could get Lazarus up. If he'd get here, and she just says, where is he?

[20 : 57] In fact, she talks to him that way when he comes. Later on, you'll see that in the next message. She talks like that. But the whole time, the whole time, God's in heaven saying, you guys do not understand me.

You don't understand how I am. You don't understand what I'm doing, but I'm God. Might I remind you that when he looks at us, he doesn't look at us like he's the waiter, and we're the person sitting at the table.

He doesn't look like he was made for our pleasure. He looks at us and says, I made you for me. Well, that's backwards, isn't it? That is not how we see it.

Even though we're Baptists, most of us do not see it that way. We look at it as like God is here to answer our prayers. God is here to meet my needs. God is here to do great things for me. But that's not what the Bible teaches.

That says that's what you think, but that's not what he thinks. Look with me at Revelation 4.11. You've heard it many times, but look at it. Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power, for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.

[22 : 06] I was made for him and for him to enjoy. I was made for him and for him to enjoy. I was made for him to get glory.

God doesn't exist to meet my needs and make me happy. Well, you might ought to write that one down. God doesn't exist to meet my needs and make me happy. God wants me to realize that I exist for him.

God wants me to realize I exist for him. You know, most of us can't stand bratty kids that think their parents owe them everything. Most of us have a real problem with that little brat kid that goes around mad at mom and daddy because I want this, I want this.

You've been in the store with them and they're yelling because they want it. And the parent says, don't, you're not getting that. And the kid starts screaming and kicking the buggy. And finally, mama gives him exactly what he wants. How many of you have ever been around that kid?

I'm looking at him. I'm looking at him. Isn't that how you're looking at him too? So I can't say it about you. Our attitude most of the time is, God, I want this.

[23 : 07] God, I want this. And God, if you don't give it, I'll scream. Fact is, we might even say this, God, if you don't do what I want, I'll quit on you. Sounded like a brat kid to me.

Hey, man, I know you don't like me tonight, but I think it's true. Lazarus is sick. He's going to die. It will appear that Jesus doesn't care.

It will appear that Jesus doesn't care. Jesus will raise him from the dead. Jesus will be greatly glorified. The sisters will have their prayers answered. You know, I tell the guys, I work with a lot of missionaries, you know that.

And I love these guys. And I tell them, you call me, I'll be on the next airplane. I will do anything I can to help you. I love you and I am here for you. And it doesn't matter to me what it costs, I'll be there for you.

Here's what Jesus said. Ah, don't worry about it. Yeah, this is all for my glory anyway. Well, Jesus, are we going to go see him? Nah. Let's take a couple of days to hang around. Right here in the same place we are.

[24 : 06] He doesn't even get out his date timer and check to see when he's got the next flight out. It's like, don't worry about a thing. And then when he gets ready to leave, you didn't notice it when we read it. He says, let's go to Judea.

Let's go again to Judea. What? Judea. Let's go to Lazarus' house. But you see, it's totally different. You've got to understand who's in charge and why.

We shouldn't be surprised when things go wrong in our lives. Do you really think you're the only person that's ever had cancer? Do you really think you're the only person that's ever had a mama die or a daddy die?

Do you really think you're the only person who's not been able to have their prayers answered? 1 Peter 4, 12. The Bible says, beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial, which is to try you as though some strange thing happened to you.

I mean, this is not a strange thing. It's like everywhere we go. We were flying into, I had flown to Lima to pick up a family that had come down as missionaries.

[25 : 05] They had several kids. I don't remember, six kids or something. And I met them in Lima, got them off the airplane, took them to a place, put them down to sleep for about four or five hours, got them up early in the morning, ran into Lima and did all their paperwork that's supposed to take a week.

I got it all done in about five hours. And we were ready to fly on to Idaqipa without them having to spend a lot of money. And we got on the airplane. It started towards Idaqipa, but it was a rainy season like it is right now.

And the water was everywhere and it was raining. And the airplanes couldn't land. They cannot land when it's raining in a city like Idaqipa. But they still are pretty far behind. It can't be raining. It can't be too overcast.

And so we're flying down there. And all of a sudden, the plane's full. And all of a sudden, on the loudspeaker system, they say, we feel the plane going down. We feel the plane taking back off.

And all of a sudden, they say, we're not going to be able to land in Idaqipa. We'll make one more pass and see if we can see good enough. But it looks like we're not going to land in Idaqipa. We're going to take you people to Tochnah, and we're going to leave you there.

[26 : 02] That's about six or eight hours from home. And so I'm understanding that. And I'm thinking, hey, I've got all these people, and they're already whiny. And so they looked at me and said, what did they say?

What did they say? What did they say? I said, we're not going to be able to land in Idaqipa. What are they going to do with us? What are they going to do with us? I said, they're going to take us to Tochnah. They said, where's that? Where's that? I said, it's six hours south, almost in Chile. That's ridiculous.

They can't do that. They have to land this plane. I said, well, I don't think we're going to be able to make them. And then we got down to Tochnah, and they landed the plane. And they came on. And they said, y'all going to have to get off, and I said, look, is there any way possible you just fly me back to Lima?

I have connections here. I don't have any here. And you're going to deadhead all the way back to Lima anyway. So we flew all the way back to Lima, got up the next day, and came down. And you know what? The missionary's wife was just, I mean, she was all torn up.

And she said this. She said, I cannot believe it. We love Jesus, and we can't even get to the city we're going to. Look at this. We didn't get any sleep last night. We're not going to get any sleep tonight.

[27 : 00] And here's what I said. You should be right in the list with Paul. I've been beaten. I couldn't get my plane to land. I've been in the deep. And she started laughing. She said, boy, you're making fun of me.

I said, well, let's be honest. This is not really a strange thing. The plane was loaded with people with the same problem we had. But isn't it funny how you're mad tonight?

Because you're the only one going through it. The Bible says in 1 Corinthians 10, 13, it's such as is common to man. Such as is common to man.

It's time for me to quit. And I'm on page 6 out of 10 pages of notes. How's that? Let me just give you a couple of things. There are sicknesses caused by Satan in the Bible. In Matthew chapter 7, you'll see verses 14 through 18.

There's a man and the devil's there. And the Lord rebukes the devil in verse 18. And he departs out of him. But that's not what's going on with Lazarus. And very likely that's not what's going on with you. The next time there's other causes for sickness.

[28 : 01] In Hebrews chapter 12, verses 5 through 11, you could be chastised. It could be that God is spanking you. It could be that God is disciplining you. But you'll know that. You don't have to worry about that.

You don't have to wonder. You know if you've been doing something. But I mean, you know, the truth is when I was sitting in church and I was a little boy, my daddy, my daddy was like the head deacon. And my daddy had fingers about twice as big a round as my fingers.

And my daddy would snap his finger like bow. And every one of us kids in the whole building that was doing something wrong, we'd all duck our heads. Because daddy's first thing was bow, bow. And son, he could flip your head, slap to the next bench.

And so, you know, if you weren't doing wrong, you didn't duck. But you know, nobody has to tell you you've been doing wrong. Come on, tell the truth. You know if God's disciplining you.

He said, my son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked. He chasteneth and scourgeth every son whom he receives. And if you endure chastisement, God deals with you as with sons.

[29 : 03] Verse 10, he does it that we might be partakers of his holiness. In 1 Corinthians 11, 30, he said some of the people were weak and sick. Some of the people were weak and sick.

So sickness sometimes is God's dealing with us. But that's not what's going on here. That's not what's going on here. That wasn't what was going on with Chris and Andrea.

Man, we look back now, and it's so funny. We were in the airport one time in America, and this lady said, My goodness, spitting image of his dad.

And we didn't say anything except we wanted to say, he ain't his kid. Not his. But God knew, didn't he? God knew.

My goal and my sickness and suffering and problems should be to honor and glorify God more with my life. We get sick and we get angry. We get sick and we withdraw.

[30 : 03] We get sick and we have a bad attitude. Instead of whining and getting angry and fussing with God, I should trust him and realize he has a purpose in this great trial. Third thing, maybe you write this down.

What appears to be God not answering is really the outworking of God's purpose in my life. What appears to be God not working is really God working his purpose. That's what's going on in the passage.

Martha and Mary had to be thinking, Lazarus died. You know, Jesus hung around two days, remember? He hung around two days and then he finally gets there by the time he gets there, he's four days dead.

They had to be thinking, what in the world? What in the world is going on? Maybe the time the message got to Jesus had already been two days and he waited two more days.

Who knows? But he was dead. Jesus didn't rush to answer their prayers, but waited two more days. He decided to go to Judea and he doesn't mention running to Lazarus.

[31 : 08] Look, if you would, at chapter 11 and verse 6. When he had heard, therefore, that he was sick, he abode two days still. Two days still in the same place where he was.

He didn't even check out of the motel. He didn't even pack his bag and put it in the trunk. It wasn't like the crowds held him. He said, I'm in no rush. And then in verse 7, he said, let's go to Judea.

He doesn't mention going. Let's run to Lazarus. He waits until he knows Lazarus is dead. At the time he has a purpose so that they may know that he is God.

Could it be that God is at work in your life right now? Could it be that you've had a wrong focus? Could it be that you have allowed your bad attitude to actually hinder God getting glory out of your life?

Could it be you have drawn back and away from God instead of seeking him more? You do not have to accuse yourself or be angry with yourself when things aren't working out.

[32 : 11] Instead, trust him that he'll do what's best. I'm going to stop there. But before I do, let me remind you that God's people that have seen God's hand and realized God was at work in tragedy have seen God do great and mighty things when it happened.

Lazarus saw it. He's going to show up. Four days late. Five days late. He's going to arrive. And when he gets there, they're going to say, if you'd have been here on time, you could have saved him.

And he's going to say, he's going to live again. And they're going to say, yeah, we know he's going to live again. But if you'd have got here on time, he wouldn't be dead now. We all know about the resurrection. But he ain't alive. No matter what you got to say about it, he ain't alive.

And Jesus said, he's going to be alive. He said, let's go to the graveyard. And when they head to the graveyard, they say, you can't do this. If you move that rock, he stinks. He has started rotting by now.

Now, you can't do this. And Jesus calls him forth. A guy named Lee Robertson was a pastor. Lost a child named Joy.

[33 : 18] She died. Lee Robertson lost his little girl. And so he decided he would bless other children. And he started a thing called Camp Joy. And thousands of children went there, free every summer.

Heard the gospel and got saved. Camp Joy. A girl named Johnny Erickson Tada went diving one day and had no idea that she would hit the bottom, break her neck, and never, ever again walk.

Her life ended in a way. But that life ending was totally the opposite. She learned to paint with her mouth. She became a speaker. And it's today all over the world speaking.

There's a guy named Tim Lee. Tim Lee went to Vietnam, stepped on a landmine. One leg's four inches long. The other leg is 11 inches long. And he speaks everywhere today.

And the truth, what gave him the platform to speak was he lost his legs. God is at work in life.

[34 : 20] Why don't you run to him? If you would just trust him. If you would just give him glory. If you would just say, I know that my God is at work in my life. This is not working out, but I am going to trust God.

If you would just speak to him and say, I believe you. If you would just look to him. So funny. Chris and Andrea had the two children. And their world was complete.

And they weren't worried about it. They used no birth control because nine years, nothing has happened. And you know what happens. Bam. She's pregnant. And they're like, my goodness.

And then they had three very small children in the house. But that's a freak thing. Couldn't happen again. And bam. She's pregnant again. And if you ask her now, she says, if I find out I'm pregnant.

I'm jumping off the building. Do you not understand? God's at work. God's at work. And what you see today is a tragedy.

[35 : 19] May someday be. You'll probably find out God was at work. I wonder what a little boy with a cleft lip and a cleft palate.

And all the trouble he's causing his family right now. And all the trouble he's and the pain he's going through. And all the issues he's having. I wonder what God has in mind to get glory from him 25 years from now.

I wonder. Don't you? This man's going to work in a ministry that was started by a man who was deaf. Nowhere to go. Nothing to do. And went down deaf.

And started that ministry down there. Would you trust God where you are? How do saints deal with sickness? They give glory to the Father. How do saints deal with sickness? They trust Jesus.

He's coming. It may be two days late in your book. It may be four days late in your book. It may seem he's not answering prayer. It may seem it's over and nothing could ever happen. But God is at work.

[36 : 23] And today, all over the world, stories are told about a guy named Lazarus who was dead four days. Lazarus is a famous New Testament character whose only claim to fame is Jesus showed up late.

Father in heaven, I love you. And I pray you'd bless your people tonight. And I pray that some of them would just trust you, Lord. I know they're hurting. I love them. And I wish I could do something. I wish I could take their pain.

But I can't. And I ask you to deal with their hearts. I ask you, God, to get them out of their seats and get them on their knees. And let them lay some burdens on you. Cast their care on you because you care for them. They're praying for things and you don't seem to answer.

They're asking you and you're not meeting financial needs. Some of them are hurting, God. But I know you're working. I know you're going to do something. They're your children and you love them. And, God, I know that some of them have health issues and they're asking you and you just don't seem to answer.

And I know there's some going through other problems and they don't have anywhere to turn and you're the only answer. Would you comfort your children tonight? Holy Spirit, would you convict them and draw them? Would you let them tonight learn to deal with their problems like saints deal with theirs?

[37 : 37] And I'll give you praise. You have been listening to Austin Gardner, pastor of Vision Baptist Church. For contact information, location, service times, or more audio and video recordings, log on to www.visionbaptist.com.

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