

"...This illness does not lead to death. It is for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it."  
— John 11:4

### I. Christ Reveals Himself in Pain

- a. We do not think that our illness could be used for God's glory or the pain we suffer could magnify our faith. Jesus uses suffering for His glory and to grow our faith.
- b. Jesus loved Mary, Martha and Lazarus, but sorrow visited their home.
- c. Lazarus was suffering a serious illness. The sisters sent a messenger to inform Jesus of his illness.
- d. In verse 5 we read striking words: 1) Jesus loved the family; 2) He heard of the illness; 3) Jesus remained where He was two days longer.
  1. Day 1- the messenger arrived with the news of Lazarus' illness; he had already died.
  2. Day 2 - the messenger returned to Bethany; Day 3 - Jesus waited another day, then traveled to Bethany; Day 4 - Jesus arrived in Bethany.
- e. This means that Lazarus died the *very day* the messenger left Bethany to notify Jesus.
- f. Jesus knows all things and said to His disciples, *this illness does not lead to death* (v.4) and *Our friend Lazarus only sleeps*. (v.12)
- g. This illness will put the glory of God on display and will make Jesus look astounding. He not only can make the blind see, but He will make the dead live.

### II. Discipleship Lessons

- a. Wait a minute Jesus, what is going on here? No doubt the disciples were confused.
  1. If Jesus loved Lazarus so much, why did He allow him to get sick? Why did Jesus delay?
  2. Why didn't Jesus heal Lazarus from a distance as He did the nobleman's son? (John 4:43-54)
  3. Did Jesus' delayed actions contradict His love?
- b. Every day in the world, 150,000 people die. Over 105,000 people have died due to Covid-19, and the threat of the sickness looms over the world.
- c. Numbers may not move us, but the passing of those we love (mother/father/friend) will move us.
- d. In times of suffering we need answers. We too can have these same questions and doubts, but it's okay. There are lessons to be learned. The sickness was an opportunity to glorify the Father.
- e. Jesus's love is referenced three times in the text. This text is largely about love.
- f. Reflect on these words, *The one whom You love is sick*. The one He loves is also *us*, you and I.
- g. His love does not exempt us from pessimism, rheumatism, asthma or any other ailment.
- h. Affliction is one of the marks of the child of God and the *trial* frequently takes the form of illness.
- i. The disciples learned that asking Jesus for healing is an act of faith. God is our refuge of strength.
  1. Some people are afraid to go to God about their health. You are not "speaking something on yourself" or "claiming illness" when you ask for healing. (Psalm 55:22)
  2. Remember we are supposed to ask. When we do, we are asking for God's glory to shine on us.
- j. Delays are inevitable. Stay faithful. There is a predetermined time for divine arrival.
  1. God will come, in His own time and way, to get His "on-time Glory."
- k. Jesus has the final word on sickness, death and even life itself.
- l. God uses illnesses and afflictions in amazing and sanctifying ways to build our faith, cultivate our humility, experience His sufficient grace.
- m. How would these lessons encourage the disciples in their ministry? How do they encourage us?

"Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer." (Romans 12:12)