

Series: John

Title: For the Glory of God

Text: John 11: 4

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John 11: 1: Now a certain *man* was sick, *named* Lazarus, of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha. 2: (It was *that* Mary which anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick.) 3: Therefore his sisters sent unto him, saying, Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick. 4: 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.

The Lord declares that Lazarus' sickness was not unto death. Knowing that Lazarus sickness did result in death—he lay in the grave 4 days—to the carnal eye this would not appear true. Then the Lord declared plainly, “Lazarus is dead.” But that did not change the truth Christ declared that “*this sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby.*”

Often things happen in our lives that appear to contradict the truths God declares to us. But they are only contradictory as we judge from carnal sight and carnal reason. God's word is true. What our Lord declares is so.

But Lazarus died. Yes. But it was not unto death. Christ is the Resurrection and the Life of his people. *The same way Christ spoke and raised Lazarus*, Christ speaks and regenerates his redeemed giving us eternal life in Christ through faith. That is the first resurrection. On such there is no condemnation; no second death.

Revelation 20:6: Blessed and holy *is* he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.

This is what Christ declared to Martha,

John 11: 21: Then said Martha unto Jesus, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. 22 But I know, that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give *it* thee. 23: Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again. 24: Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day. 25: Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: 26 And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?

Of course the Lord would raise Lazarus. In that sense his physical death was not unto physical death. But this is why Christ said that Lazarus physical death was not unto death. It was not unto the second death. It was not unto separation from Christ. Lazarus was born-again of God before he died physically. If we are born of God then our physical death is not unto death; not unto the second death. Since this is so, nothing God's elect face is unto death.

Romans 8: 28: And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to *his* purpose. 29: For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate *to be* conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. 30: Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified. 31: What shall we then say to these things? If God *be* for us, who *can be* against us?...38: For I am persuaded, that neither DEATH, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, 39: Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

But not only was it not unto death, our Lord declares it is “*for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby.*” This is also true of everything that happens in this world throughout time. God rules all things. God works them all together for his glory. This is the great end for which our God and Savior created the world and rules it by his power.

Colossians 1: 16: For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether *they be* thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: 17: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. 18: And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all *things* he might have the preeminence. 19 For it pleased *the Father* that in him should all fulness dwell;

Proposition: For God's elect whatever happens is by the hand of our God and it is *not unto death but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby*. If we could remember this in every trouble, it would help us greatly.

Divisions: 1) Let see this in the fall; 2) In the cross 3) Concerning everything in our lives

THE FALL

The fall of the first Adam was for the glory of the last Adam. It can be said that the fall was not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby.

But in Adam all died. Yes, in Adam all sinned and became guilty and died spiritually.

Romans 5: 12: Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that [in whom] all have sinned:

Adam was the head of all his people. Every son of Adam was in our first father and did what he did. We sinned in Adam, became guilty and died spiritually. How horrified Adam must have been the first time he became sick. He had never known sin. So he never knew sickness. The first time he ran a fever, he must have thought, "Oh, my sin! I caused this and afflicted all my children after me." Yes, Adam's sin was unto death. But for God's elect it was not unto the second death for this reason:

Romans 5: 14...[Adam] was the figure of [Christ] that was to come

Christ is the Head of all those who God chose by his grace. Adam was made Head of all who would be born of Adam picturing Christ who is Head of all who shall be born-again of him.

In eternity, God elected a people to save in Christ Jesus. Therefore, though Adam's fall resulted in our death in Adam, for God's elect in Christ the fall was "*not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby*."

God our Father and the Son of God are glorified for his Wisdom and sovereign grace in choosing the last Adam before the fall of the first Adam. The fall was God's ordained means to the end of God sending forth his Son for the salvation of his people and display of his righteousness to bring glory to his name.

1 Corinthians 15:22 For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

Romans 5: 21: That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.

THE CRUCIFIXION

Christ's death on the cross "*was not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby*."

Indeed our Savior died on the cross like as Lazarus physically died. The difference is Christ laid down his life *of himself* AND *conquered* sin, death and hell for his people by his death. So then we shall never come into condemnation.

The difference is Lazarus died because he was a sinner. Christ died because he bore the sin of his people.

The difference is Lazarus was raised by our Lord. Our Lord raised himself from the grave because he conquered death by his blood for his people. Before going to the cross, Christ told his disciple repeatedly that the cross would not be unto death but he would rise again.

Luke 9: 22: Saying, The Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be slain, and be raised the third day. [so he arose]

The cross was for the glory of God. It manifests God's sovereignty in bringing to pass his will exactly according to his purpose. The wicked hands that crucified Christ only did what God determined before to be done.

Acts 4: 26: The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ. 27: For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, 28: For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done.

The death of our Substitute on the cross glorified God's Wisdom and Righteousness and Mercy. He fulfilled his law and showed mercy to his people justly by the death of his Son in place of his people. He is a just God and a Savior by Christ dying in the room and stead of his people under divine justice. Truth and mercy have kissed in Christ crucified. God is just and the Justifier of the believer in Christ.

The cross was so that *the Son of God might be glorified thereby*. God raised him to his right hand and sends this gospel because he will have his Son glorified! The Son of God bore the sin and curse of his people that he might be glorified for putting away the sin and curse of his people. Christ died on the cross that he might be glorified for destroying death and bringing life and immortality to light for his people through the gospel. Christ is the Resurrection and the Life!

THE TROUBLE

Seeing the fall and our Lord's death on the cross was for God's glory, we can be sure that every trouble believer's face, even the death of God's saints is for God's glory. Whatever trial and trouble God's people suffer, it can be said, *"This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby."*

Sickness and trouble and sorrow are a message from God especially for his child. Lazarus sickness and death was the means to this great end for *"the glory of God."* This is the ultimate reason and end for all that befalls us as the sheep of his pasture. He shows us his glory as he did here.

We see Christ's glory as Man and God in one. When he approached them and saw them weeping and heard their words, verse 33 says, he *"groaned in the spirit and was troubled,"* [marg: he troubled himself]...verse 35: "JESUS WEPT." This is Christ's glory! Our great Savior became a real Man. The Son of God became the Son of David after the flesh. He is the Firstborn among many brethren, the Elder Brother of his brethren. How like our Elder Brother to be touched with the feeling of our infirmities! When we mourn, especially over the loss of loved ones, our Lord makes us remember, *"Jesus wept!"* The Son of God took our nature as a Man. He is touched with the feeling of our infirmities—"Jesus wept!"

We see Christ's glory as the Son of God. This same one who wept said in verse 43: *"Lazarus, come forth! 44: And he that was dead came forth."* We see the glory of our Redeemer as God and Man here. He wept then he raised the dead! He is the Son of man and the Son of God. Not only is Christ touched with the feeling of our infirmities as a Man, he is God who is able to comfort us in every need.

We behold the glory of the infinite, infallible, unerring wisdom of God! We see it in our Lord's tender dealing with Mary and Martha. The Lord was troubled at their unbelief but he was tender because he loved them. Their hearts were broken. And he was tender with them. It would be calloused to be otherwise. Our Lord is merciful. He delights in mercy and he knows we are but dust.

Psalm 103: 10: He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. 11: For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him. 12: As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us. 13: Like as a

father pitieth *his* children, *so* the LORD pitieth them that fear him. 14: For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we *are* dust.

We experience it in his dealings with us when we sin or are sick or when we mourn our brethren who sin or are sick or who have died or in any trouble.

Song of Solomon 2:6: His left hand *is* under my head, and his right hand doth embrace me.

What more can we want? To know his glory as the sweet Consolation of his people! Mary, Martha, and Lazarus were made to behold the glory of God's love in Christ for them more by this. Many a believer is made to know his adoption more fully by the Lord sending sickness, sorrow, and trouble. By his keeping grace, when we have no strength, we behold our interest in Christ. We know him from the first hour Christ reveals himself to us. But much is known in theory. Yet, in sorrow and suffering, through the Lord's keeping hand we experience his glory in keeping us. We experience the glory of security in his divine election; the glory of Christ's security of God foreordaining us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ our Lord; the glory of God's security in our Father's everlasting love; we experience the security of Christ's precious blood. All of this is because we experience how Christ keeps us as the apple of his eye and makes us see Christ is All unto us in a more truthful way.

We behold his glory by his ability to wean us from sin, self and the world. Martha and Mary were holding on to perishing things too tightly. That is why they mourned so greatly. We get busy with our worldly things as Martha often was. We hold too tightly to perishing things. But Christ weaned Martha a little more from the cares of this world. She flew to Christ when she heard he was coming. So Christ brings us into communion with him. He makes us see Christ is the one thing needful more fully than we knew before.

Sickness and bitter trouble bring to us some of the most valuable riches of God's holy blessings. We behold the glory of God in the face of Christ Jesus in his patience and longsuffering toward us as Christ was with them that day. We experience Christ's glory in strengthening us in our sorrowful and sleepless nights. They bring us to exhaustion! But the Lord gives more grace!

We behold his glory in giving us more faith and patience to wait upon the Lord. He makes us know this—whatever trouble it is—is not unto death. Nothing shall separate us from the love of God in Christ. God our Father sends trouble by his hand to glorify the Son of God to bring us nearer to him to know he is our Savior for all eternity!

When a dear brother or sister recovers from sickness or God brings them out of the fiery trial, it is to the praise of the glory of God. But also remember! When we lay the body of a dear brother in the grave, it is to the praise of the glory of God. "*Precious in the sight of God is the death of his saints.*" We who remain behold Christ's glory by his continuing to give us grace and consolation and strength in Christ.

Brethren, sickness and trouble is school for the soul. God shows his glory more in times of distress than most others. Yes, we behold his glory in joyous times. But when we have no strength, we behold Christ truly is our Strength. We knew him by the hearing of the ear. But then we know him by the experience of his glory and grace! Then he brings us to say

Psalm 73:26: My flesh and my heart faileth: *but* God *is* the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.

The glory of God the Father's promises are more precious. The glory of our Redeemer's sin-atonement blood is more precious. The glory of his Spirit constraining us by his love, making us desire to honor him, is precious. HE IS MORE PRECIOUS!

Humility of mind, meekness of spirit, self-renunciation—these things are all due to a fresh view of Christ's glory. We enter the trial proud and strong. But we come out of a little child trusting our heavenly Father. We enter covetous, worldly-minded. But God brings us out with our whole heart cast upon the breast of our Beloved.

Let me end with this. Brethren, knowing how Christ works this for us now in these light afflictions, how wonderful it must be for our brethren who have passed through the grave into his blessed presence to

behold his glory face-to-face! In that day we shall see how true our Lord's words really are. Then we shall know that every sickness, every trouble, every curve and every valley that was sorrowful unto us was "*not unto death but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby.*"

In the face of every troubling providence, let us remember these words of our Redeemer, "*This is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified thereby.*" And let us give him the glory by believing and waiting on him and speaking of Christ our Consolation to one another.

Amen!