

When the Hardest Thing You Face is for The Glory God God John 11:1–16

11 Now a certain *man* was sick, Lazarus of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha. ² It was *that* Mary who anointed the Lord with fragrant oil and wiped His feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick. ³ Therefore the sisters sent to Him, saying, “Lord, behold, he whom You love 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 may be glorified through it.**”

⁵ Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. ⁶ So, when He heard that he was sick, He stayed two more days in the place where He was. ⁷ Then after this He said to *the* disciples, “**Let us go to Judea again.**”

⁸ The disciples said to Him, “Rabbi, lately the Jews sought to stone You, and are You going there again?”

⁹ Jesus answered, “**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. ¹⁰ But if one walks in the night, he stumbles, because the light is not in him.**”

¹¹ These things He said, and after that He said to them, “**Our friend Lazarus sleeps, but I go that I may wake him up.**”

¹² Then His disciples said, “Lord, if he sleeps he will get well.” ¹³ However, Jesus spoke of his death, but they thought that He was speaking about taking rest in sleep.

¹⁴ Then Jesus said to them plainly, “Lazarus is dead. ¹⁵ And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, that you may believe. Nevertheless let us go to him.”

¹⁶ Then Thomas, who is called the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, “Let us also go, that we may die with Him.”

Introduction

The gospel of John is no doubt one of the most profound theological books in all of the Bible. I would be willing to say that it is one of the deepest and most profound books in all of the world.

It is amazingly simplistic, yet tremendously deep.

As you read the gospel, it is as if you are riding on smoothest clearest part of the ocean only to realize the the water is 7 miles deep.

When you study the Greek language, one of the first books you will translate is I John, because of simplicity of the words and structure of the sentences.

Yet the words John uses have such richness and depth to them that he is able to tackle some of the most complex doctrines in all of the Bible.

Just some of the topics we have addressed so far speak to this

1. The Deity of Christ
2. The Nature of God
3. The Glory of God
4. The Trinity
5. God's Sovereignty
6. Mans Responsibility
7. The Order of Salvation -
8. The doctrine of Regeneration
9. The Effectual Call
10. The Inability of Man, and Depravity
11. The Elect purpose of God
12. The nature of True Worship
14. The Purposes of God in Hardening the sinner
15. The Purpose of God in reaching Israel and the Gentiles

And as expected, Chapter 11 does not disappoint.

Here at the very beginning we are confronted with the reality that even in sickness and Death, God has a purpose.

The broader doctrine of this would be, Gods purposes with evil, sin and death.

In others words, Why is there so much evil, pain, sickness and death in the world.

The Atheist love this argument. They believe that it is impossible to reconcile an all powerful, all knowing, all good God with the existence of evil. If God is all Good and knowing what evil would do and All powerful so that he

could have stopped it, then why did he let evil come into his universe.

The Conclusion is, This God does not Exist.

I would say, I agree 100%,
That God does not exist. That is not the God of the Bible.

God is Good, But He is also holy and Just.
He is also Sovereign, all wise and all knowing.

So we can rightly assume some basic things from This God that is revealed in the Bible

Because God is a Sovereign HOLY and Good

1. Evil does not exist because of a mistake
2. Evil has a purpose in the big picture of Gods plan
3. Evil will eventually suffer the hammer of Gods justice

So John addresses this deep subject with great simplicity.

But also the sickness death and eventual resurrection of Lazarus addresses something all of us have dealt with or will deal with.

The Sickness and death of a loved one.

In some cases the sickness is long and death is expected.

In others it is sudden and completely unexpected.

Regardless, often we are left with questions in our mind and hearts.

Asking God why.

Why God did they die so suddenly?

Why God did they die so young?

Why God did they have to suffer so long?

Right in the Heart of this chapter we find Martha and Mary struggling in there minds as to why?

John 11:21 (NKJV)

²¹ Now Martha said to Jesus, “Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died.

John 11:32 (NKJV)

³² Then, when Mary came where Jesus was, and saw Him, she fell down at His feet, saying to Him, “Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died.”

How many times, have we had thought like these.

God, if only you hadanswered prayer

.....Healed them

.....stopped that drunk person
from hitting them

then they would have lived.

It is here in this chapter that we become more aquatinted it the The God We Love and Serve.

Right in the middle of one of the darkest and most difficult times in our lives, We meet God.

It is here where we get a glimpse into the heart of God.

John 11:33 (NKJV)

³³ Therefore, when Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her weeping, He groaned in the spirit and was troubled.

John 11:35 (NKJV)

³⁵ Jesus wept.

Jesus experiences the pain of death, depth of sorrow of a sickness leading to death of a someone you love.

What a beautiful example of the humanity of Christ. But more so the The compassion of GOD

Chapter 11 records the last and most powerful of the seven miraculous signs in the gospel of John (cf. 2:1–11; 4:46–54; 5:1–17; 6:1–14; 6:15–21; 9:1–41), the resurrection of Lazarus four days after he died. The miracle's primary purpose, however, was not to restore him to life, or to comfort his grieving sisters. Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, first and foremost, so that He and the Father would be glorified (vv. 4, 40).

The glory of Jesus Christ blazes in this passage against a dark backdrop of rejection and hatred on the part of the Jewish leaders.

The resurrection of Lazarus evidenced Christ's glory in three ways: it pointed unmistakably to His deity (11:25–

27); it strengthened the faith of the disciples (11:15); and it led directly to the cross (11:53).

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2006). *John 1–11* (p. 452). Chicago: Moody Press.

Review

As noted in the previous chapter of this volume, the Lord's confrontation with the Jewish authorities in Solomon's portico (10:22–39) marked the end of John's record of His public ministry; chapters 11 and 12 form a bridge between Christ's public ministry and His passion, recorded in chapters 13–21.

After the confrontation, Jesus withdrew across the Jordan River (10:40) to the region of Perea, where He remained and ministered for a few months before returning to Jerusalem for Passion Week.

It was in the midst of that Perean ministry that He returned briefly to the vicinity of Jerusalem to raise Lazarus from the dead. Yet, in spite of the undeniable miracle Jesus would perform, the Jewish authorities' hatred for Him only intensified (11:46–53).

Therefore, after raising Lazarus, the Lord would once again leave the area surrounding Jerusalem (v. 54), not to return until His triumphal entry.

Lesson

- I. The Critical Man
- II. The Concerned Sisters
- III. The Confused Disciples
- IV. The Courageous Statement

I. The Critical Man

v1 Now a certain *man was sick*, Lazarus of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha

certain man— —we know very little, this is the only time he is mentioned.

The unembellished introduction of him only as **a certain man** who **was sick** emphasizes that **Lazarus** is not the primary focus of the story

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2006). *John 1-11* (p. 453). Chicago: Moody Press.

We can assume he was a believer by the response of Jesus to Lazarus and the confession of Martha in v.27

John 11:27 (NKJV)

²⁷ She said to Him, “Yes, Lord, I believe that You are the Christ, the Son of God, who is to come into the world.”

Lazarus - common name

not the Lazarus in the Story of Luke 16 the Bigger

לְעֶזֶר, apparently the same as, Eliezer, אֱלֵעָזָר, - whom
 God helps
of Bethany

Definition

"house of affliction" "house of the poor"
the town of Mary and her sister Martha
 we will meet them in the next verse

This is a different Bethany than the one that is
 mentioned in

John 10:40–42 (NKJV)

⁴⁰ And He went away again beyond the Jordan to the
 place where John was baptizing at first, and there He
 stayed. ⁴¹ Then many came to Him and said, "John
 performed no sign, but all the things that John spoke
 about this Man were true." ⁴² And many believed in Him
 there.

"Bethany was but a village, yet had it been marked out
 in the eternal counsels of God as the place which was to
 witness the greatest and most public miraculous
 attestation of the Deity of Christ." A.W Pink

was sick,

Pres

Act

participle

asthenēs (an adjective, derived from 1 /A "without" and *sthenos*, "vigor, strength") – properly, without vigor, living in a state of *weakness (depletion)*. be diseased, impotent, sick, weak.

From [asthenes](#); to be feeble (in any sense) -- be diseased, impotent folk (man), (be) sick, (be, be made) weak.

We are not told what kind of sickness or how long he was sick. What we do know is that it was sickness severe enough to send a message to Jesus to come.

II. The Concerned Sisters

² It was *that* Mary who anointed the Lord with fragrant oil and wiped His feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick. ³ Therefore the sisters sent to Him, saying, “Lord, behold, he whom You love 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 may be glorified through it.**”

⁵ Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus.

⁶ So, when He heard that he was sick, He stayed two more days in the place where He was.

² It was *that* Mary who anointed the Lord with fragrant oil and wiped His feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick.

John further identified Bethany as **the village of Mary and her sister Martha**. The apostle, giving no further details, evidently expected his readers to be familiar with

the two sisters (who are referred to in Luke’s gospel [Luke 10:38–42]). Thus, he could write that **it was the Mary who anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped His feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick**; even though he would not relate that story of that anointing until chapter 12, his readers already knew of it from the Synoptic Gospels (Matt. 26:6–13; Mark 14:3–9).

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2006). [*John 1–11*](#) (p. 453). Chicago: Moody Press.

3 Therefore the sisters sent to Him, saying, “Lord, behold, he whom You love is sick.”

Understandably, **the sisters** were deeply concerned about their brother’s condition. They sent **word to Jesus, saying, “Lord, behold, he whom You love is sick.”** The nature of Lazarus’s illness is not specified, but his death was imminent. Mary and Martha believed that Jesus was willing to heal their brother because of His deep **love** for Lazarus; and they were equally confident that He had the power to do so (vv. 21, 32).

The sisters’ message is beautiful in its tender simplicity. They did not spell out the details of Lazarus’s condition, nor did they specifically ask the Lord to do anything. (They realized that it would be extremely

dangerous for Him to travel anywhere near Jerusalem at this time; cf. v. 8.)

They also did not attempt to manipulate Jesus by reminding Him of Lazarus's affection for Him. They merely appealed to the Lord's **love** (*phileō*; the love of friendship and affection)

Original Word: φιλέω

Part of Speech: Verb

Transliteration: phileó

Phonetic Spelling: (fil-eh'-o)

Short Definition: I love, kiss

Definition: I love (of friendship), regard with affection, cherish; I kiss.

5368 *philéō* (from **5384** /*phílos*, "affectionate friendship") – properly, to show *warm affection* in intimate *friendship*, characterized by tender, heartfelt consideration and kinship.

“Christ’s fathomless love for us, and not our feeble love for Him, is what we ever need to keep steadily before our hearts. Our love varies; His knows no change.”

A.W.Pink

“The verse now before us plainly teaches that sickness in a believer is by no means incompatible with the Lord’s love for such an one. There are some who teach that sickness in a saint is a sure evidence of the Lord’s displeasure. The case of Lazarus ought forever to silence such an error. Even the chosen friends of Christ sicken and die. How utterly incompetent then are we to estimate

God's love for us by our temporal condition or circumstances!" Pink

The Sisters concern for their brother, humbly and trustingly brought the need to His attention MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2006). [John 1-11](#) (p. 454). Chicago: Moody Press.

Psalm 37:4-7 (NKJV)

4 Delight yourself also in the Lord,
And He shall give you the desires of your heart.

5 Commit your way to the Lord,
Trust also in Him,
And He shall bring *it* to pass.

6 He shall bring forth your righteousness as the light,
And your justice as the noonday.

7 Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him;...

Psalm 46:1-2 (NKJV)

1 God *is* our refuge and strength, A very present help in trouble.

2 Therefore we will not fear,
Even though the earth be removed,
And though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea;

Psalm 55:22 (NKJV)

22 Cast your burden on the Lord,
And He shall sustain you;

He shall never permit the righteous to be moved.

1 Peter 5:7 (NKJV)

⁷ casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.

⁴ When Jesus heard *that*, He said, “**This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified through it.**”

Since Jesus was across the Jordan (10:40), a messenger from Bethany would have needed at least a day to reach Him. (Of course, the Lord in His omniscience already knew about Lazarus’s serious illness [cf. vv. 11, 13–14]).

Due to the severity of his condition, Lazarus may have even died before the messenger reached Jesus, since he had already been dead for four days when Jesus arrived in Bethany (vv. 17, 39).

(The messenger’s journey to Jesus would have accounted for one day, the Lord then delayed two days (v. 6) before taking one more day to travel to Lazarus’ home. That brings the total number of days to four.)

⁴ When Jesus heard *that*, He said, **“This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified through it.”**

This is one of the most amazing Statements in all of the Bible.

That your sickness and death can be for the purpose of Glorifying God.

Like the blind man of John 9

John 9:2–3 (NKJV)

² And His disciples asked Him, saying, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?”

³ Jesus answered, **“Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but that the works of God should be revealed in him.**

You can get sick and die for various reasons

There is a reason for every sickness and every death in the history of the world!!!!

1. You can get sick and die because you are a sinner and live in a fallen world

Romans 6:23 (NKJV)

²³ For the wages of sin *is* death....

Ezekiel 18:20 (NKJV)

²⁰ The soul who sins shall die.

Luke 13:1–5 (NKJV)

13 There were present at that season some who told Him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. ² And Jesus answered and said to them, “Do you suppose that these Galileans were worse sinners than all *other* Galileans, because they suffered such things? ³ I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish. ⁴ Or those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them, do you think that they were worse sinners than all *other* men who dwelt in Jerusalem? ⁵ I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish.”

The Fall brought all the sorrow, pain, disease and death
Revelation 21:4 (NKJV)

⁴ And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.”

2. You can get sick and die because you may be chastised as a believer

1 Corinthians 11:29–30 (NKJV)

²⁹ For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. ³⁰ For this reason many *are* weak and sick among you, and many sleep.

3. You can get sick and die because you are under the wrath of God

Acts 12:21–23 (NKJV)

²¹ So on a set day Herod, arrayed in royal apparel, sat on his throne and gave an oration to them. ²² And the people kept shouting, “The voice of a god and not of a man!” ²³ Then immediately an angel of the Lord struck him, because he did not give glory to God. And he was eaten by worms and died.

Revelation 16:10–11 (NKJV)

¹⁰ Then the fifth angel poured out his bowl on the throne of the beast, and his kingdom became full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues because of the pain. ¹¹ They blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and did not repent of their deeds.

Revelation 9:20–21 (NKJV)

²⁰ But the rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands, that they should not worship demons, and idols of gold, silver, brass, stone, and wood, which can neither see nor hear

nor walk. ²¹ And they did not repent of their murders or their sorceries or their sexual immorality or their thefts.

4. You can get sick and die for the Glory of God.
for the resurrection

Example

Lazarus

Job

All other resurrections

By the way

All these reason for sickness and Death ultimately bring
Glory to God

Being sick and dying for

1. Being a Sinner and living in a fallen world
2. Being a disobedient Believer and being chastise
by God
3. Being an unrepentant sinner and recieving the
wrath of God

These all Glorify God's Justice in response to Sin

4. Getting sick and dying and then being resurrected to
life will

Glorify God's Grace, Mercy, love, compassion, power,

A note about the last statement of v4

⁴ When Jesus heard *that*, He said, **"This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified through it."**

Purpose clause with ἵνα [*hina*] and the first aorist passive subjunctive of δοξαζω [*doxazō*]

Robertson, A. T. (1933). *Word Pictures in the New Testament* (Jn 11:4). Nashville, TN: Broadman Press.

Protestant Reformers expressed though in Latin. Soli Deo Gloria which means “To God alone be the glory.” Soli Deo—“to God alone.” Gloria—“the glory.” These words stand virtually as a motto of the Reformation.

Psalm 115:1 (NKJV)

¹ Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us,
But to Your name give glory,
Because of Your mercy,
Because of Your truth.

Isaiah 48:11 (NKJV)

¹¹ For My own sake, for My own sake, I will do *it*;
For how should *My name* be profaned?
And I will not give My glory to another.

Isaiah 42:8 (NKJV)

⁸ I *am* the Lord, that *is* My name;
And My glory I will not give to another,
Nor My praise to carved images.

Exodus 34:14 (NKJV)

¹⁴ (for you shall worship no other god, for the Lord, whose name *is* Jealous, *is* a jealous God),

John 5:23 (NKJV)

²³ that all should honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him.

The point is that Jesus is desirous of Glory that only God should get, so it is another declaration that Jesus is God.

5 Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus.
⁶ So, when He heard that he was sick, He stayed two more days in the place where He was.

⁵ Now Jesus **loved** Martha and her sister and Lazarus.

loved == first in sentence for emphasis

Imperf

Active

Ind.

agapáō – properly, to *prefer*, to *love*; for the believer, *preferring to "live through Christ"* (1 Jn 4:9,10),

The Fact of Christ Love for Martha, Mary and Lazarus is stated first and as a means of emphasis for the next statement.

John's note that **Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus** makes explicit what is implied throughout the story. The Lord was close to this family, having

undoubtedly spent much time in their home during His visits to nearby Jerusalem (cf. Matt. 21:17; Mark 11:11–12; and the discussion of 8:1 in chapter 27 of this volume). John interjected the thought here to show that the Lord's subsequent action did not reflect a lack of love and compassion on His part.

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2006). *John 1–11* (p. 454). Chicago: Moody Press.

⁶ So, when He heard that he was sick, He stayed two more days in the place where He was.

So—- therefore

So He loved them therefore he stayed two more days

To the human eye, this makes no sense. If you love him, you would drop all you are doing and go now. NOT Wait.

The Lord's close relationship with Lazarus, Mary, and Martha makes what happened next seem all the more puzzling. Instead of rushing back to Bethany in response to the sisters' message, **when** Jesus **heard that Lazarus was sick, He then stayed two days longer in the place where He was.** The Lord did not delay to allow Lazarus to die since, as noted above, he had probably died before the messenger reached Jesus.

The delay did serve 3 purposes:

1. it strengthened the sisters' faith in the Lord by forcing them to trust Him;

2. it made it clear that Lazarus was truly dead hence that Jesus' raising of him was indeed a miracle;

3. and, as always, Jesus operated according to God's timetable, not man's.

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2006). [John 1-11](#) (pp. 454-455). Chicago: Moody Press.

We don't always understand Why, But we can be assured that God know Why.

He is in perfect control of it all.

When all seems out of control, and as if God is an infinite distance away,

We can say He is NOT

Isaiah 55:8-9 (NKJV)

8 "For My thoughts *are* not your thoughts,
Nor *are* your ways My ways," says the Lord.

9 "For *as* the heavens are higher than the earth,
So are My ways higher than your ways,
And My thoughts than your thoughts.

Isaiah 30:18 (NKJV)

¹⁸ Therefore the Lord will wait, that He may be gracious to you;
 And therefore He will be exalted, that He may have mercy on you.
 For the Lord *is* a God of justice;
 Blessed *are* all those who wait for Him.

Proverbs 3:5–6 (NKJV)

⁵ Trust in the Lord with all your heart,
 And lean not on your own understanding;
⁶ In all your ways acknowledge Him,
 And He shall direct your paths.

Romans 8:28 (NKJV)

²⁸ And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to *His* purpose.

III. The Confused Disciples

⁷ Then after this He said to *the* disciples, “Let us go to Judea again.”

⁸ The disciples said to Him, “Rabbi, lately the Jews sought to stone You, and are You going there again?”

⁹ Jesus answered, “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. ¹⁰ But if one walks in the night, he stumbles, because the light is not in him.”

¹¹ These things He said, and after that He said to them, “Our friend Lazarus sleeps, but I go that I may wake him up.”

¹² Then His disciples said, “Lord, if he sleeps he will get well.” ¹³ However, Jesus spoke of his death, but they thought that He was speaking about taking rest in sleep.

¹⁴ Then Jesus said to them plainly, “Lazarus is dead. ¹⁵ And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, that you may believe. Nevertheless let us go to him.”

IV. The Courageous Statement

¹⁶ Then Thomas, who is called the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, “Let us also go, that we may die with Him.”

