Where’s God When I’m Waiting? April 25, 2021

*John 11:1-16 Series: Life, Full and Unending*

Waiting in prayer is a disciplined refusal to act before God acts. – Eugene Peterson

Intro: What God wants for your life isn’t delivered in 30 minutes or free.

Your problems don’t prove that there’s a problem with God’s love for you or yours for Him

1. Lazarus and his sisters loved Jesus

v. 1 *Now a certain man was ill, Lazarus of Bethany …*

v. 2 *It was Mary who anointed the Lord with ointment and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was ill.*

1. Jesus loved Lazarus and his sisters

v. 3 *Lord, he whom you love is ill.*

1. When you wait, God may be seeking to display His glory
2. As Lazarus waited, Jesus prepared to show His glory

v. 4 *But when Jesus heard it he said, “This illness does not lead to death.”*

v. 4 *It is for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it.*

1. Do you want God’s glory, or do you want 30 minutes or free?

Psalm 27:13-14 *I believe that I shall look upon the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living! Wait for the LORD; be strong, and let your heart take courage; wait for the LORD!*

Lamentations 3:25 *The LORD is good to those who wait for him, to the soul who seeks him.*

* What are some small things that we get impatient with today?
* Why do problems tend to make us doubt God’s love or question whether there’s something lacking in ours?
* In what way did Lazarus’ illness bring glory to God?
* How can troubles in our lives bring glory to God?

1. When you wait, God may be trying to show you His love
2. Jesus’ love makes the wait longer not shorter

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

v. 6 *So, when he heard that Lazarus was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was.*

1. It’s not fear or self-interest that delays Jesus

v. 8 *The disciples said to him, “Rabbi, the Jews were just now seeking to stone you, and are you going there again?”*

vv. 9-10 *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. But if anyone walks in the night, he stumbles, because the light is not in him.”*

D. A. Carson: As it turns out, this is his last trip south. This is when he is going to get arrested, when he is going to be beaten and flogged and finally crucified.

1. Do you want God’s love, or do you want 30 minutes or free?

Isaiah 30:18 *Therefore the LORD waits to be gracious to you, and therefore he exalts himself to show mercy to you. For the LORD is a God of justice; blessed are all those who wait for him.*

Proverbs 20:22 *Do not say, “I will repay evil”; wait for the LORD, and he will deliver you.*

* How was it more loving for Jesus to delay His return by another two days?
* According to v. 9, why wasn’t Jesus afraid to go near Jerusalem?
* Why would God “wait” to be gracious to us?

1. When you wait, God may be trying to deepen your faith
2. Jesus was glad for the opportunity to strengthen the disciples

v. 13 *Now Jesus had spoken of his death, but they thought that he meant taking rest in sleep.*

vv. 14-15 *Then Jesus told them plainly, “Lazarus has died, and for your sake I am glad that I was not there, so that you may believe.”*

1. Most of us have great intentions but less than mature faith

v. 16 *So Thomas, called the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, “Let us also go, that we may die with him.”*

1. Do you want to grow, or do you want 30 minutes or free?

Isaiah 40:31 *they who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint*

2 Peter 3:9 *The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.*

“The Message” paraphrase of Romans 8:24-25 *Waiting does not diminish us, any more than waiting diminishes a pregnant mother. We are enlarged in the waiting. We, of course, don’t see what is enlarging us. But the longer we wait, the larger we become, and the more joyful our expectancy.*

* Why would Jesus be “glad” that He wasn’t there when Lazarus died?
* What are some of the things that often matter more to us than growing in our faith?
* How does waiting for the Lord give a person eagle-like strength?
* What reason for God’s “slowness” does 2 Peter 3:9 give?

Study ahead: Next week, we’ll study John 11:17-44

Notes