

“Praying Through a Crisis”

John 11:1-44

Introduction

When we have a crisis, that crisis should drive us to the Lord and not away from Him. In John 11, Martha and Mary went to Jesus with a crisis of life and death for which there was no earthly or human solution. Martha and Mary were Jesus’ friends, and they shared an intimate relationship. In John 11:3 and 11:5, the Word says that Jesus loved them and they loved Him. Martha and Mary went to Jesus for help in their time of trouble. This story shows believers that even, and especially, during times of crisis, they should go to God with their requests. This passage also teaches us that one can be spiritual and enjoy intimacy with God, yet be smack dab in the middle of a crisis. What’s important is that we don’t view our crisis as either a measure of our spirituality or as a reason to distance ourselves from intimacy with the Savior. Instead, we must trust that even in our difficulties, God can reveal His greater glory (John 9:1-3) as He simultaneously works things out for our good.

It can be hard, however, when it doesn’t look like Jesus cares or when it doesn’t seem as if He is there when we experience trouble in this world. In John 11:21, Martha expressed her disappointment that Jesus wasn’t around when her brother died. Both she and her sister wondered why Jesus not only was absent on the day that Lazarus died, but actually delayed His arrival by two days. It’s okay to be perplexed, to raise questions, and to be honest with God in a crisis. When we are honest with God, He is not surprised. While our emotions are real, we shouldn’t lean on our emotions because they have the great potential to lead us incorrectly. Our emotions should only drive us to God, who is the foundation of our faith.

When we come to God with our questions, concerns, fears, and insecurities, we position ourselves to experience God’s power. As we have faith, we benefit from Jesus’ intercessory work and see God glorified. Jesus demonstrated His power when Martha exercised faith and removed the stone of Lazarus’ grave. Faith is not a feeling; it is an action for the believer to act like God is telling the truth. Jesus delayed coming to see Lazarus because He was looking for God’s greater glory. Also, Jesus only prayed after He witnessed Martha’s obedience of faith. In the same way, we must exercise faith because that is what pleases God. Then we can look for how God is going to be glorified in the situation, even when things look worse. Stay with Christ in your crisis. Don’t abandon Him. Instead, drive yourself to Him. When that’s difficult, allow others to walk with you and help you seek Him for your good and His glory.

Getting Started

1. Have you faced a crisis in the last twelve months? How did that crisis challenge your faith? How did it build your faith?
2. A life crisis can be a good situation in which God can display His glory and also cause all things to work together for your good. How have you experienced these truths in your own life?

Let’s Get Personal

1. Do you find it challenging to be honest with God? Why or why not?
 2. John 11 paints a picture of Jesus and His intimate relationship with his friends. Would you define your relationship with Christ as intimate? Why or why not? What does the Word tell us we should do as it relates to our intimacy with Christ (cf. Heb 4:16)?
 3. Many people, Christians included, ask “why me” when a crisis hits in their life or the lives of the people they love. Have you ever asked “why me?” If you’ve ever felt that God was being unfair, how did you reconcile your faith in God and your disappointment about your situation?
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Take the Next Step

1. In what practical ways can you do your part to develop intimacy with Christ this week?
2. Jesus did His work of resurrecting Lazarus after people did the work of rolling away the stone (John 11:41). Are there any acts of faith you need to engage in? Is your lack of faith, as evidenced by your lack of action, delaying your answer to prayer?
3. What was the truth from this week's message that most impacted you? How will that affect how you walk out your faith this week?
4. Want to go deeper? Take a look at the following passages: Job 42:1-5; John 9:1-3; Hebrews 4:14-16; 7:25; Mark 4:35-41

Renew Your Mind

"Therefore He is able also to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them."

Hebrews 7:25
