

Leaving Room for God

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Introduction

I. The particulars of this crisis.

John 11:1-3 (NIV) ¹Now a man named Lazarus was sick. He was from Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha.
²This Mary, whose brother Lazarus now lay sick, was the same one who poured perfume on the Lord and wiped his feet with her hair. ³So the sisters sent word to Jesus, "Lord, the one you love is sick."

A. 3 common viewpoints most of us have about God when facing a crisis.

1. We believe God loves and cares for us.
2. We believe God can make a difference in troubling times.
3. We have expectations about how God will respond in a crisis.

Psalm 18:2-3 (NIV)

II. Jesus' contrarian response to this crisis.

John 11:4-6 (NIV) ⁴When he heard this, Jesus said, "This sickness will not end in death. No, it is for God's glory so that God's Son may be glorified through it." ⁵Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. ⁶Yet when he heard that Lazarus was sick, he stayed where he was two more days.

A. God does love us.

John 11:5 (NIV) We are told that -- *Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus.*

B. God will make a difference in troubling times.

John 11:4 (NIV) *Jesus said, "This sickness will not end in death. No, it is for God's glory so that God's Son may be glorified through it."*

C. God does not always do things the way we expect Him to.

John 11:6 (NIV) *Yet when he heard that Lazarus was sick, he stayed where he was two more days.*

III. How Jesus unfolds His contrarian plan and our response to it.

A. His goal is clear but our understanding of it is not.

John 11:7, 11b-15 (NIV) ⁷Then he said to his disciples, "Let us go back to Judea."... ^{11b}he went on to tell them, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep; but I am going there to wake him up."¹²His disciples replied, "Lord, if he sleeps, he will get better."¹³Jesus had been speaking of his death, but his disciples thought he meant natural sleep. ¹⁴So then he told them plainly, "Lazarus is dead, ¹⁵and for your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him."

B. God's timing and ways sometimes cause us to question Him.

John 11:18-21 (NIV) ¹⁸Bethany was less than two miles from Jerusalem, ¹⁹and many Jews had come to Martha and Mary to comfort them in the loss of their brother. ²⁰When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went out to meet him, but Mary stayed at home. ²¹"Lord," Martha said to Jesus, "if you had been here, my brother would not have died."

John 11:32 (NIV) *When Mary reached the place where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet and said, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died."*

IV. We need to leave room for God.

John 11:23-26 (NIV) ²³Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again."²⁴Martha answered, "I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day."²⁵Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies;²⁶ and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?"

John 11:34, 38-39 (NIV) ³⁴"Where have you laid him?" he asked. "Come and see, Lord," they replied.³⁸Jesus, once more deeply moved, came to the tomb. It was a cave with a stone laid across the entrance.³⁹"Take away the stone," he said. "But, Lord," said Martha, the sister of the dead man, "by this time there is a bad odor, for he has been there four days."

John 11:40-41a, 43b-44 (NIV) ⁴⁰Then Jesus said, "Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?"⁴¹So they took away the stone...^{43b}Jesus called in a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!"⁴⁴The dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth around his face. Jesus said to them, "Take off the grave clothes and let him go."

Conclusion