

Jesus Christ Omnipotent

Harmony M.B.C., March 29, 2009 (Morning)

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John 11:20-46

Jesus had intentionally delayed His trip to the home of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus. He had something drastically different than healing a sick man in mind when He did this. Sick people get well every day. God made the human body system in such a way that it is capable of healing itself, barring things that will not allow it to heal. More than this, our Savior had been busy before in His ministry healing all kinds of sick folks, so this miraculous power of His was for the most part, well known. But, at this point in His ministry, He purposes to preach a message about eternal life through a reality illustration. Part of that message is to focus attention on the fact that He as God With Us has within Himself the power to set aside death. Part of that message is aimed at accomplishing an attitude adjustment in believers. And part of that message is about demonstrating that some people don't ever get it.

As we begin this chapter, Jesus has heard about Lazarus being sick. Still, he seems to just drag His feet about rushing to Lazarus. Our bible tells us that He loved Lazarus. So, we know that what He did during that period when He delayed was based on love. Delay on the part of the Lord when we are thinking He should rush headlong to our rescue is always part of a plan He has. We have trouble seeing the whole plan, and so, we think the Lord has no intention of coming to our rescue sometimes. This is never true.

At the point of our text reading, Jesus has arrived near the scene, Martha has rushed to Him and had a conversation. Martha learned some things that day, perhaps about how far off center her actual perception of Christ and His reach was from what was true reality. We have an opportunity to learn a similar lesson this morning as we go through this account. May God help us to get that lesson in our hearts.

I want us to notice first of all:

I. Jesus Christ is **never limited** by the condition of His creatures when He comes to make a person alive (v. 25)

- Jer 32:27 Behold, I *am* the LORD, the God of all flesh: is there any thing too hard for me?
- To illustrate how Christ overcomes any obstacle to giving life: The legend of Alexander and the Gordian Knot (He winters at Phrygia and learns of the legend that whoever unties the Gordian Knot will be king of Asia - can't untie the knot so slices it in half with his sword and thus gets it done)
- Better illustration: The Red Sea was an obstacle to the children of Israel passing out of Egypt - God parts the Red Sea

II. Notice how **permanent the action** of Christ is on a being (v. 26)

- John 10:28 "...I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish..."

- John 3:36 “He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life...”

III. Now, notice that even people of faith **have difficulty realizing the scope of Christ’s power and prerogative** (vv. 21, 32)

- These two testimonies are true in one sense but they are testimonies that reveal how we tend to mentally limit the power and prerogative of God (this is an artificial limitation which has relevance only to our view of how large God is)
 - > The one spiritual sense in which they are true: When Christ the Son of The Living God is present with us, death is banished
 - > The ways we may presume to limit the power and prerogative of God:
 - By presuming that Lord has to be visibly present to bring about change or alter an outcome (explain “visibly present” in terms of people looking for “signs” from the Lord). This is a kind of “Thomas syndrome.”
 - By presuming that the Lord is not the grand supervisor of all things (“...if thou hadst been here....”)

IV. Next, we want to emphasize that Christ empathizes with our self-inflicted pain; **self-inflicted pain** which **results from our incomplete understanding** of His absolute power and absolute wisdom (vv. 33-38)

- I believe the groaning and weeping of Christ here was in sympathy to the sad condition that man had come to as a result of sin. That being, that his sight was dimmed and his understanding darkened about who the great God of heaven was; what He could do; what His purposes are.
 - > When I was in college doing lab work, we often looked at microscopic organisms as part of the study. (Describe difference in what you saw when the microscope was out of focus vs. when you finally got it focused on the organism under the slide). Our understanding is like an unfocused microscope; we see stuff about our Lord, but it is blurry until we have a focused view of what our Savior truly can do and why He does it.
 - > This unfocused understanding leads us to make assumptions which cause us grief (illustrate by the grief of Martha, Mary, the Jews with them over the death of Lazarus despite the presence of Christ).

V. We think in terms of good and bad outcomes in our lives through the prism of our needs and desires, but **outcomes in our lives are really about God’s glory** (vv. 39-40)

- That family on that sad day needed and wanted Lazarus to be back among them; healthy and alive
 - > Raising Lazarus was a mercy to his family and shows Christ’s true compassion
- But the real objective here was the revelation of what glory God possesses
- Any outcome has this as its greater goal
- We must make every effort to see the glory of God in all outcomes

VI. Christ has **complete concurrence with God the Father** in matters affecting us (vv. 41-42)

- This is the basis for His invitation to us in John 14:13 “And whatsoever ye shall ask in my

name, that will I do....”

VII. Both **belief and skepticism** will always be found among humans who are witnesses to God’s glory (vv. 45-46)

- A revelation of God’s glory will sometimes lead to the conversion of others. This is the way the Lord works.
- But, for some, such an even will only make an occasion for them to be skeptical.
 - > Quote Charles N. Brennecke: He revealed his true skepticism about scripture when he made this comment about the biblical account in Joshua 10 where God suspended the normal passage of the day by about one whole day:
 - "If this story is the sort of childish nonsense that appeals to Bible-believers, they are certainly welcome to it. I do hope, for their sake, that they don't try to apply their insights to actual projects!"
- “...went their ways....” is a phrase that accurately describes the attitude of those who made this an occasion to inform the Pharisees about what Jesus was doing.
 - > Also accurately describes the behavior of humans in every generation who refuse to acknowledge Christ when He manifests Himself