

Do You Believe?

- *John 11:21-45*

- **In our passage of scripture we are going to be reading this morning, Jesus enters a very difficult situation & He faces some of His closest followers with a startling question.**
 - Lazarus, a close friend of Jesus, has fallen extremely sick & Mary & Martha have asked that Jesus come, not to just visit with him or say His goodbyes, but they were expecting Jesus to heal Lazarus from his sickness.
 - An interesting statement is found in verse 4 when Jesus says, “This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God,”
 - As the clock ticks, Lazarus condition worsens, and Jesus seems in no hurry to rush to his side.
 - Yet Jesus knows full well the situation at hand, as He does ours today, and He knew that even though others would see Him as too late, He would show up just in time.
 - As Jesus reaches Bethany, Martha sort of rebukes Jesus for not getting there sooner . . . AS IF IT WAS TOO LATE FOR JESUS TO DO ANYTHING!
 - Jesus lovingly takes the time to remind Martha in verses 25 & 26 – “Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?”
 - What a profound statement for Jesus to ask a time like this!
 -) She is going through one of the most difficult times in her life.
 -) She is in a lot of pain as she is trying to deal with the death of her brother.
 -) She is frustrated and confused as to why this happened.
 -) And Jesus asks her the question, “Do you believe in Me?” But I believe this is the question that needs to be asked of us as well this morning, Do You Believe?
- **As they are going to the tomb of Lazarus, Jesus is silently weeping and the mourners see this and they come to the conclusion that Jesus is too late, there is nothing else He can do.**
 - This was the One who could open the eyes of the blind,
 - He could feed the multitude,
 - He could heal the lame,
 - He could have healed Lazarus when he was alive, but now it is too late, He is dead and there is nothing that anyone can do to bring him back to life.
 - And you know, that is almost a true statement. There was nothing anyone could do to bring him back to life . . . EXCEPT JESUS!
 - If you are here this morning and it seems like it is too late in your life for God to be able to do something, let me remind you that our God does some of His greatest work when the world says it can’t be done. When the world says it’s too late, that’s just about the time where God proves He is still in control.
 -) When Moses and the children are at the Red Sea & the Egyptians were closing in, the world said God was too late, but God provided a way.
 -) When little David showed up to fight Goliath and he stepped out there by his self in front of the giant, the world said it was too late, but God was right on time.
 -) Listen, the Dr.’s may have done all that they can do when it comes to cancer, but let me remind you that God is not fearful of cancer, He is not only the Creator of these bodies, He is also the Great Healer of the bodies and NOTHING is beyond His reach.
 -) You may feel that your marriage is over. You have asked the Lord for help, but now the divorce papers lay before you, it’s not too late for God to move.

) Perhaps you have prayed for your children & now they have taken a turn & you feel that there is no hope. Let me remind you that we serve an awesome God who will always show up right on time.

- **Now watch this, as Jesus closes in on the tomb where Lazarus is laid and they begin to roll back the stone, Martha makes an outstanding statement to our Lord in verse 39.**
 - **“Lord, by this time he stinketh: for he hath been dead four days.”**
- **Martha still didn’t get it. Those around Jesus thought it was too late and now Martha has begun to think it is too late for Jesus to do anything.**
 - Yes she believed that Jesus was the Christ, the Messiah.
 - Yes, she believed He was the Son of God.
 - Yes she had heard and seen the many miracles He had done for others, but it is almost as if she couldn’t believe that Jesus could do anything about her situation, more specifically about the condition of Lazarus.
 - He had healed many people of a lot of sickness, but this was different.
 - He had raised others from the dead, but could he do the same for Lazarus?
 - How do I know that Martha didn’t get what Jesus was doing? Look at what he says in verse 40:
 - “Jesus saith unto her, Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?”
 - He had just told her of this earlier in the chapter. She heard, but her mind was so filled with questions that she did not truly believe.
- **What situation or you going through right now that maybe before today you have even questioned if it was too late for God to do anything about it? What is it?**
 - We are sort of like Martha. If God had showed up earlier, He could have done something, but now it is too late. Is it too late? Is God not able to change your situation right now? Can the Dr.’s prognosis limit God’s power?
 - Maybe it’s just difficult for you to “reveal” the situation to God or “roll the stone away” in your life or in your circumstance.
- **Jesus wanted the situation revealed and given to Him. True, THEY had done all THEY could do, but now God through His Son was about to change the situation completely.**
 - If we never roll the stone away, if we never give God the situations in our life and allow Him to take control, we will never see the glory of God revealed.
 - Does God need us to do His work? Absolutely not. He is perfectly capable of handling any situation that comes our way on His own.
 - But when we give our circumstances over to an all-knowing and all-powerful God, we will grow in our faith in Him.
- **What happened when they rolled the stone away? God brought back to life that which was dead, Lazarus who was dead was now alive!**
 - What about you this morning?
 - Maybe it is your marriage relationship, it stinks and you have just given up!
 - Maybe it is your child or children, they are so far from God, they are so rebellious and you are ready to give up because you are tired of this stinky situation, it is more than you can handle.
 - Or maybe at work, the people around you are abusive, unkind, or your boss is unfair and you just hate the smell, it just stinks and you just want to quit!
 - Or maybe it is in ministry, things are not going the way you wanted them to go, things are not working out, it is beginning to stink and you are ready to run instead of rolling the stone away!
- **Listen, wherever you are at, whatever you are going through this morning, don’t give up, don’t quit, roll the stone away and see the glory of God.**
 - The Lord said in Jeremiah 29:11, “For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.”

- Do you believe that? Of course we do in the good times, when things are going well for you. But what about during the bad times, when things are not going like you thought they would? You see, it is especially true in those difficult times, when things seem so dark, when they seem so dead, when they just plain stink! You see, God does not always answer in our time, as quickly as we would like, in the manner we think He should, but I will say this, His timing is perfect and He has a perfect plan for our lives as we have seen in Him raising Lazarus from the dead.
- What God is asking us to do is to roll away the stone, expose those issues, no matter how smelly they may be, and see the glory of God. He can bring those things which seem so dead back to life if we will trust in Him.
- **We all know the story of Noah, how God called him to build an ark for a storm like they had never seen before.**
 - He faced ridicule,
 - He faced laughter and mockery,
 - But he stuck with it, and the Bible tells us in Hebrews 11:7 – “By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.”
- **In other words, Noah wasn’t afraid to roll back the stone and have faith in God. Faith! Not talent, not abilities, not a lot of money . . . FAITH! That is what was required of Noah to bring him out of a dire situation and that is the same thing that God requires of us today.**
 - Noah did what God told him to do. No, it wasn’t always easy. Yes it was hard. Yes it seemed at times as though he was all by himself, but his faith remained strong in God, and God delivered him.
- **In the book of Numbers Moses sent 12 spies into the land of Canaan, the land that God had promised to them. A representative from each of the 12 tribes of Israel were sent to spy out the land, 2 of which were Joshua and Caleb. Now the promise that God gave to Moses and he shared with his people was that the land of Canaan was theirs, God was going to give it to them. So as the spies went into the land, spending forty days there, most of them reported back to Moses bad news.**
- **In Numbers 13:27-28, 33 we are told, “And they told him, and said, We came unto the land whither thou sentest us, and surely it floweth with milk and honey; and this is the fruit of it. Nevertheless the people be strong that dwell in the land, and the cities are walled, and very great: and moreover we saw the children of Anak there. And there we saw the giants, the sons of Anak, which come of the giants: and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight.”**
 - You know what that means, 10 of the 12 spies saw the land, it was great like God had said, but they believed they could never defeat the inhabitants of the city.
 - Did they believe? Absolutely not. They took their eyes off of God and His promise and would not “roll the stone back” in their situation. They were stuck and God was too late.
 - But, there were 2 spies that came back with a different report. Joshua & Caleb came back and reported in verse 30, “Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it.”
- **How can there be such a difference in the 2 reports? Did they both see the same thing? I believe they both saw the same situation, but one was willing to roll the stone back and take God at His Word while the other was filled with doubts that God could do what He said He would do.**
- **How can we regain that perspective if we lost it? In John chapter 12 we see Mary anoint the feet of Jesus for His burial; she believed that He would be raised from the dead, something that the apostles did not even get at this point.**
 - How could she see these things?
 - How could Mary’s faith be so great that she would believe He would do as He said He would?
 - Because she spent time at the feet of Jesus and as she did, she saw things that others couldn’t see, she had a proper perspective of the situation.

- Many times we struggle with situations in our life because we don't have a correct perspective of a situation.
 - Are you spending time in prayer?
 - Are you studying and meditating on God's word?
 - Are you in fellowship with other believers?
 - Are you spending time at the feet of Jesus?
- **Danish sculptor Thors Walden created a life-size granite carving of Jesus. This is a fascinating statue, the way he sculptured it because when you stand next to this statue, you can only see the body of Jesus, you can't see His face no matter how hard you try. Now that can be very disappointing, but there is a sign placed next to this statue that reads:**
 - If you want to see the face of Jesus, You must sit at His feet.
- You know what, as you sit at the feet of this statue, you can see His face perfectly. I think that is very true in our own lives, if we want to see Him clearly, we must sit at His feet.
- And do you know what happens as we obey the Lord? David said in Psalm 40:3, "And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God: many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the LORD."
 - As we obey Him, His joy will flow from our lives, we have a bounce in our step and a song in our heart and the Lord puts us on display for others to see so they too may receive what we have, Jesus!
- **In this world it can get tough, it may seem hopeless, lifeless, and it just stinks at times to the point where you just don't want to believe. Don't go down that path but roll the stone away and see the glory of God, what He wants to do.**
 - I can't tell you that immediately your situation will be resolved, but I can tell you that God will give you His peace as you go through those times.
 - He will strengthen you. We can have the victory if we look to Jesus!
- **Let me leave you with this one last verse this morning. Jesus said in John 16:33, "These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world"**
- **If there are some things I can encourage you with this morning it is this,**
 - Have enough faith in God to roll the stone away in your life.
 - We can have the right perspective of any situation if we are sitting at the feet of Jesus.
- **Remember what Jesus said to Martha, "Do you believe this?" He is asking you the same thing this morning! Do you believe?**