

John 11:5-10      “No Daylight Savings Time Here”

JOH 11:5-10 Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. 6 Yet when he heard that Lazarus was sick, he stayed where he was two more days. 7 Then he said to his disciples, "Let us go back to Judea." 8 "But Rabbi," they said, "a short while ago the Jews tried to stone you, and yet you are going back there?" 9 Jesus answered, "Are there not twelve hours of daylight? A man who walks by day will not stumble, for he sees by this world's light. 10 It is when he walks by night that he stumbles, for he has no light."

As we begin our study this morning we must keep in mind the context of this story of Lazarus and his family. Jesus was previously in Jerusalem but was literally driven out of the city as the Jews threatened His life.

As He essentially kicks the dust off of His feet He goes to the area of Galilee, specifically the place beyond the Jordan where John the Baptist was baptizing and where Jesus began His public ministry as He was baptized by John. We know that this was an area designated as Bethany.

JOH 1:28 This all happened at Bethany on the other side of the Jordan, where John was baptizing.

We also know that Lazarus and his sisters lived in a village called Bethany, but this Bethany was in Judea about a hundred miles south from where Jesus was at this time.

And though distance separated Mary, Martha and Lazarus from Jesus, their love for each other continued strong. This family and our Lord had a special friendship as we saw last week which is brought out in verses three through five.

JOH 11:3-5 So the sisters sent word to Jesus, "Lord, *the one you love* is sick." 4 When 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." 5 *Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus.*

And yet, despite our Lord's love for them, His response to the messengers sent from Martha and Mary would be one which on the surface seems cold and disconnected from the desperate situation found in Lazarus' sickness.

You and I might very well have dropped everything and immediately went the great distance to be at the bedside of Lazarus as we comforted the two sisters. And yet, that is not what Jesus does.

JOH 11:6 Yet when he heard that Lazarus was sick, he stayed where he was two more days.

I thought Jesus loved Lazarus. Why would He delay His going to him in his time of need especially when He was able to do something for Lazarus, namely, miraculously heal him?

Well, as we saw last week, there is a reason for Jesus doing this and it all has to do with the way He answered the messengers of Martha and Mary.

JOH 11:4 When 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."

There is a tendency for all of us to sometimes forget that all that God does is ultimately for His glory. It may be difficult at the time to see that, but the truth is that our Almighty and loving God has a purpose for our lives and will often use different situations in life to bring that to fruition.

I'm sure Martha and Mary were quite perplexed when their messengers brought back the message from Jesus that the sickness of Lazarus would not lead to death, when in fact there was a good chance that by the time they got back to Bethany in Judea, Lazarus was already dead, or at least would shortly die.

Was this some sort of cruel joke? Was Jesus not concerned for the feelings of Martha and Mary in their time of need? How many times have you and I wondered how God could seemingly ignore our requests for Him to intervene on our behalf with a need we had?

Well, the truth of the matter is that despite how we may not understand the ways and will of God on everything that goes on in our lives, it doesn't mean that God's love for us has wavered in any way, shape or form. To suggest that situations in life that we deem disastrous, for example, are the measure of how much God loves us or not, is to confuse the whole matter of a loving and Sovereign God.

This situation with Lazarus might be compared to what we saw back in chapter nine with the blind man as it relates to the will of God and His desire to glorify Himself through us.

JOH 9:1-3 As he went along, he saw a man blind from birth. 2 His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" 3 "Neither this man nor his parents sinned," said Jesus, "but *this happened so that the work of God might be displayed in his life.*

We all need to realize that the will of God for you and me is that His life might be displayed in our lives and that Jesus Christ might be glorified through us, which means that it is His call as to how that will take place.

Now obviously, one of the ways in which His life will be displayed and glorified through us is as we live lives of love and obedience demonstrating the fruit of the Spirit, which is a work of God proving that we are new creatures in Christ.

But there is another way in which the Lord may accomplish this and that is through trials and tribulations in our lives. Those trials and tribulations will often refine and prove what the Spirit of God is doing in the way of sanctifying us.

It's relatively easy for us to walk with God and follow Him when life is going well. But how do you test something to prove its quality? You put it through a real life situation that it was intended overcome.

The military is a classic example of how this works. There is a certain amount of trial and error in training, and even a certain amount of testing. But that's not the real trial. How does one ultimately know if the training paid off? Only when that training is challenged with real combat.

It's one thing to shoot each other on the field of mock battle as each opposing side makes a kill as they shoot with lasers attached to their weapons, but only as those soldiers use those tactics and weapons in war does one really know how well the training was.

At some point we must all be tested to establish that what we possess in Christ is real. Now obviously, this is not for God's benefit. He knows the heart of every true believer. And so, the question then is, why does He allow such testings and trials? And the answer is for our benefit and His glory.

This is what Peter meant when writing to the church about the trials many Christians were experiencing at that time.

1PE 1:3-7 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade -kept in heaven for you, 5 who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time. 6 In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. 7 These have come so that your faith - of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire - may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.

If we have a proper understanding of trials in our lives we can begin to appreciate what it is that our Lord is trying to do in our lives to make us better servants of our Most High God, so that He may be glorified through us as the world notes that we have a Father in heaven who is faithful, even in the midst of trials.

James, the half-brother of Jesus, learned this in his own life and points this out in his letter to the church.

JAM 1:2-4 Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, 3 because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. 4 Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.

So, what all of this means is that when we face trials of many kinds we can be assured that whether it is Satan who is trying to buffet us, or God bringing something into our lives for a purpose, it is all designed by God to help us, not hurt us.

Now, at the time it may very well hurt us in a human sense. To be so insensitive to someone's tragedy to where we just quote them a verse like the one we saw in 1Peter or James, is to miss an opportunity to demonstrate that love of Christ by being there for them.

There is nothing loving about being detached from someone hurting and taking an almost academic approach to their hurt by saying, look just consider it pure joy that your father died, or that your son was paralyzed in that car accident. That's not love, that's cruel.

And though Jesus responds in a way that doesn't answer the request of Mary and Martha as they perceived He might, it doesn't mean He didn't answer their request or was any less concerned about Lazarus.

This is something else that confounds us sometimes. We come to God with our prayers and petitions and often approach Him as though the prayer is the window at the drive-through where we pay for the food, and only moments later we move up a few feet to the next window where we pick up the food.

Aside from some incompetent employee messing up your order periodically, you always get what you ask for at those fast food chains. Drive in, tell them what you want and drive out with your order.

But God is not in charge of some celestial Burger King. He only does what pleases Him and brings glory to His name. That doesn't mean that it won't include answering your prayers, but sometimes His answer is no.

Now, we've all heard this example, but it's worth noting because it involved one of the most Godly men who ever served the Lord. His name was Paul. He was an apostle. And he, like you and me, was not wild about trials that appeared to be more than we can handle at times.

2CO 12:7-10 To keep me from becoming conceited because of these surpassingly great revelations, there was given me a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. 8 Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. 9 But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. 10 That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

Was the answer Paul got the one he was looking for? Nope. But he was content with that answer because he knew it was the very thing he needed. But more important it was the very thing God desired for Paul, so that through the testing of Paul's faith the Lord would get the glory as Paul pointed everyone back to Christ whose grace was sufficient in his life.

In other words, Paul was finally looking with spiritual eyes at his situation. Prior to that his eyes were on his problem. And there's nothing in and of itself wrong with that. If you've got a problem, you don't solve it by ignoring it.

But if we have dealt with it before the Lord and we find that the problem has not gone away, then it would benefit us by accepting the fact that the Lord is using this situation in our lives for our good and that His grace is most certainly sufficient.

And the result? Our faith is stretched and increased through the situation. And that is really what is going on in our text. Apparently, up to this point in the lives of Lazarus, Martha and Mary, they enjoyed the blessings of Jesus as He fellowshiped with them in their home, and as they were taught at His feet.

This may have been the first real testing of their faith, which should remind us that no child of God will escape the testings which are designed by God for our good. He loved this family in Bethany and yet His love for the Father and His will takes priority.

And the will of the Father was for Jesus to remain where He was for an additional two days, even after the request for Him to go to Lazarus.

JOH 11:6 Yet when he heard that Lazarus was sick, he stayed where he was two more days.

By the way, the messengers sent by Martha and Mary apparently are not given any time frame as to when Jesus would come to Lazarus. We're not told in verse six that Jesus told them that He was going to stay an additional two days, only that Lazarus' sickness would not lead to death.

This probably didn't make any sense to these messengers or to us when all's Jesus needed to do was to go to Lazarus and heal him. After all, he was His friend. And this is exactly where we get ourselves in trouble when we try to live a spiritual life in what A.W. Pink calls common sense, which is to say, according to our natural thinking.

Sometimes our walk with Christ doesn't follow those lines of common sense. Sometimes we have to just concur with the writer of Proverbs.

PRO 3:5-6 Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; 6 in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight.

Our Lord's disciples had to trust that Jesus knew what He was doing and that though His response might have been confusing to them at the time His love for Lazarus was just as strong. And the next verse proves this.

JOH 11:7 Then he said to his disciples, "Let us go back to Judea."

For two days Jesus stayed in the area of Galilee after receiving the news that His friend Lazarus was dying. Do you think there was a moment in those two days where Jesus was not thinking of Lazarus? Do you think for a moment that Jesus was not also rejoicing in doing the Father's will in Lazarus' life when the time was right?

You see, like Martha and Mary, you and I often approach God with a request expecting a certain type of answer in a certain time frame. And simply because we don't get the answer we're looking for in our time frame, we sometimes think that God has shelved our request as He moves to answer someone else's prayer.

The fact is that there is never a moment when God is not thinking of our request and our desire to know His will. And though His ways are not our ways, and His time frame is not our time frame, He is always considering the time in which He will answer our prayer and meet our need as only He can.

And so, when the perfect time has come Jesus tells His disciples that it is now time to go to Judea. Now keep in mind that the disciples of Jesus know what our Lord is capable of doing as it relates to miracles and signs and wonders. They know that He can certainly heal the sick and raise the dead.

In fact, relatively early on in the ministry of Jesus, near the sea of Galilee, we have recorded for us a number of miracles including the raising of the dead.

MAR 5:35-43 While Jesus was still speaking, some men came from the house of Jairus, the synagogue ruler. "Your daughter is dead," they said. "Why bother the teacher any more?" 36 Ignoring what they said, Jesus told the synagogue ruler, "Don't be afraid; just believe." 37 He did not let anyone follow him except Peter, James and John the brother of James. 38 When they came to the home of the synagogue ruler, Jesus saw a commotion, with people

crying and wailing loudly. 39 He went in and said to them, "Why all this commotion and wailing? The child is not dead but asleep." 40 But they laughed at him. After he put them all out, he took the child's father and mother and the disciples who were with him, and went in where the child was. 41 He took her by the hand and said to her, "Talitha koum!" (which means, "Little girl, I say to you, get up!"). 42 Immediately the girl stood up and walked around (she was twelve years old). At this they were completely astonished. 43 He gave strict orders not to let anyone know about this, and told them to give her something to eat.

And so, when Jesus, back in our text, says that it's time to go to Judea, it can be assumed that He is going back to do one of three things. He is either going back to comfort the survivors of a dead brother; heal Lazarus; or to raise him from the dead if in fact he has not overcome the sickness which lead to death.

But notice the response of the disciples.

JOH 11:8 "But Rabbi," they said, "a short while ago the Jews tried to stone you, and yet you are going back there?"

Now, on the surface it appears that they are only concerned with the safety of Jesus. And there is no doubt that they are. But just under the surface you don't have to dig too deep to understand that they're response includes a concern for their own safety.

They are right; a short while ago the Jews tried to stone Jesus in Judea, specifically, Jerusalem. But this raises a question. Simply because serving God may be hazardous at worse, or inconvenient at best, does this mean we stop serving and doing His will?

Well, we know for Jesus that it doesn't. And so, His statement and their response shows the way in which God's will may be one thing and yet our fear or lack of faith may keep us from pursuing what God wants for us. But for Jesus He delighted to do His Father's will and now it was time to answer that request, or prayer, if you will, from Martha and Mary.

But it is the importance of the will of God that Jesus wants to drive home for His disciples. He wants them to understand that we are all given a period of time in this world to love and serve Christ and there is a purpose in that time in which we must walk by faith.

JOH 11:9-10 Jesus answered, "Are there not twelve hours of daylight? A man who walks by day will not stumble, for he sees by

this world's light. 10 It is when he walks by night that he stumbles, for he has no light."

Now on the surface this appears to be a strange answer, although the disciples should be used to these kind of answers by this time as Jesus was always using such language and parables to teach them.

But let's look at it.

Remember, this is in response to the concern the disciples had for the safety of Jesus, and probably for their own safety as well. What does walking in the day and stumbling in the night have anything to do with their concern for safety?

Well, everything, if we understand what Jesus is saying.

The first thing Jesus points out is that there is a specific amount of daylight. Now, they didn't have daylight savings time in their day and so the day and night was equally divided up with approximately twelve hours each.

In their world there was no effective artificial light. They didn't have huge flood lights on their tractors to harvest at night. What little light they could create in the form of lamps fueled with oil didn't serve them very well as far as giving any productive time during night hours.

And so, for the most part, everything they did, be it herding sheep, planting crops, and so forth was done during daylight hours. Their world came to an end when the sun went down. And so, everything that was done to be productive was done during those twelve hours of daylight.

What Jesus is teaching His disciples is that the daylight He refers to is the time in which He must get the Father's work done. In other words, the three plus years of His public ministry is the daylight He alludes to.

It doesn't mean that He can't minister to people in the dark hours. Rather His entire life is the light which illumines the world as He is in the world.

This is precisely what Jesus told His disciples on a previous occasion; specifically that occasion when He was about to heal the blind man found in this gospel.

JOH 9:2-7 His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" 3 "Neither this man nor his parents sinned," said Jesus, "but this happened so that the work of God might be displayed in his life. 4 *As long as it is day, we must do the work of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work.* 5 *While I am in the world, I am the light of the world."* 6 Having said this, he spit on the ground, made some mud with the saliva, and put it on the man's eyes. 7 "Go," he told him, "wash in the Pool of Siloam" (this word means Sent). So the man went and washed, and came home seeing.

What Jesus was saying in that portion of Scripture is the same thing He says in our text. The day is the time He is given by the Father, and by implication the time we are given to do the work of God. The night is associated with the time in which all activity ceases. In Christ's case the night would be the time in which His earthly ministry was over, which came at the cross.

The night for you and me is when we die and are no longer able to serve the Lord in this world. The daytime is what our Lord wants His disciples and us to concentrate on. In other words, every waking moment must be used to glorify Him.

Now obviously that doesn't mean that every waking moment will be used to do some specific religious activity. But it does mean that every waking moment of our lives must be used to glorify our Lord, even in the mundane things of life.

What I mean by that is this. Though you and I may not be teaching a bible study, or sharing the gospel with someone at any given moment, we are always to be walking in this world in such a way where the light of the world is being shown through us. That's walking in the Spirit.

When doing something, for example, as routine as partaking of a meal we are to show our thanks to God unto His glory as we consider our spiritual responsibilities to our Lord.

1CO 10:31 So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.

All of life is meant to shine for Christ as we live in His light and life. The life you and I have in Christ is our daytime. And while it is day we must serve the Lord with gladness in whatever we do as Paul again tells the Colossians.

COL 3:17, 23-24 17 And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. 23 Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, 24 since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.

But we must understand that there is a specific amount of daylight for each of us as there was for Christ. At some point our time is over in this world. There are only twelve hours of daylight Jesus says, and then comes the night.

But there is something else alluded to here in our text by Jesus and that is that we can choose to walk by the light, and not stumble, or we can try and go it in our own strength and ways, and bump into things, not being very productive.

What will it be? Shall we do the Father's will, or shall we do our own will? Let us consider the very words of Jesus addressed to every one of His people which includes you and me in Christ.

MAT 5:14-16 "You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. 16 In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.