



Raising Lazarus from the Dead

John 11:38-44 | Ryan Pfeiffer | October 12, 2025

INTRO. Last week I gave us a Faith Exercise... Salting our convo with Jesus.

- — “I was... but now I am....” — Here’s a fun example. Read Leigh’s text.

Today is the 7th and FINAL Sign in John’s Gospel. BEST FOR LAST!

1. Can you even imagine the awe & utter amazement of the sisters!
2. Clearly this Sign is pointing to Jesus’ claim in v25 “I AM the resurrection”!
3. We’ll get to that in Nov... today -focus on how Jesus engages their faith...

3 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 Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. 6 So when he heard that Lazarus was sick, he stayed where he was two more days, 7 and then he said to his disciples, “Let us go back to Judea.

Jesus shows up 4 days after Lazarus died... and his sisters are heart broken!

When Jesus finally arrives... first Martha, then Mary come out to him and say:

- vs 21/32 Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.

God’s delays can result in deep disappointment in us.

This moment raises the question... Why does Jesus delay??

FOCUS. What does this teach us about God’s delayed answers to our prayers?

1) GOD DELAYS BECAUSE HE LOVES US. 5 Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. 6 So when he heard that Lazarus was sick, he stayed where he was two more days...

This is crazy... Jesus loved them... So when he heard... he stayed

- “So when”... (hōs oun ēkousen)... therefore...
- NOT... Jesus loved them... BUT... he stayed two more days...
- Jesus loved them THEREFORE he stayed two more days...

It’s Jesus’ love for them that leads him to delay his arrival by 2 days.

Easy to think... God is ignoring... God is indifferent...It’s not God’s will...

How do we see Jesus’ love in the delaying?

1. Jesus already has a purpose and plan. V4 This sickness will not end in death. No, it is for God’s glory so that God’s Son may be glorified through it.

God’s delays- governed by his purposes... his purposes r always for our good.

Jeremiah 29:11 I know what I’m doing. I have it all planned out—plans to take care of you, not abandon you, plans to give you the future you hope for. (MSG)



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It's God's love that doesn't settle for second best... God seeks his best for us.

2. Jesus is not indifferent to our pain. When Jesus finally arrives- sees the grief... v35 "Jesus wept" and everyone responds... v36 "See how he loved him!"

Isaiah 53:4 Yet it was our weaknesses he carried; it was our sorrows that weighed him down...

2) GOD DELAYS FOR THE SAKE OF OUR FAITH. 14 So then he told them plainly, "Lazarus is dead, 15 and for your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him."

... so that you may believe.

God's delays deepen our faith... as hard as it is... its true... and inescapable.

There was a Jewish superstition at the time... "For three days [after death] the soul hovers over the body, intending to re-enter it ... but as soon as it sees its appearance change, it departs." — Midrash Tanhuma, Pequdei 3.

It's not by accident that it was on the 4th day Jesus performed this Sign.

Showed Jesus was more than a healer... he could call a soul back from death

God delays so we learn to trust his timing.

- God has set the timeline of our life. Job 14:5 You have decided the length of our lives. You know how many months we will live, and we are not given a minute longer.
- God's timing is always better than ours. Isaiah 60:22 "When the time is right, I, the Lord, will make it happen.

3. God's timing strengthens our faith. Psalm 27:14 Wait for the LORD; be strong and take heart and wait for the LORD.

God's delays are not necessarily his denials.

3) GOD'S DELAYS REVEAL HIS GLORY. 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."

40 Then Jesus said, "Did I not tell you that if you believe, you will see the glory of God?" 41 So they took away the stone.

If you believe, you will see... So counterintuitive!

Proverb dating back to 1639... Seeing is believing. That's easier!

Sometimes we get stuck in our faith journey...

1. If I see more evidence... I'll believe.
2. If God would make things clearer... I'll obey.
3. If God will give me what I want... I'll trust Him.

We think... the more we see the more we'll trust... not true!



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Vs 45 Therefore many of the Jews who had come to visit Mary, and had seen what Jesus did, believed in him. 46 But some of them went to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done.

Some believe while others see the same miracle and see a threat.

Seeing doesn't always lead to believing... 2 Cor5:7 We walk by faith not by sight.

Delays invite us to believe before we see... Philip Yancey, Disappointment with God— Faith means believing in advance what will only make sense in reverse.

INVITE— WORSHIP TEAM.

Jesus delays to give everyone something bigger than a miracle to believe in.

Jesus delays to reveal his Glory... 25 Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; 26 and whoever lives by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this?"

Do you believe that when you die you will rise thru faith in Jesus?