



Chapter 9

The Raising of Lazarus and God's Timing

Reflections to Journal and Share

- How big is your paradigm of what God can still do in your life?
- Do you have “Fourth Day” faith-stretching examples of God’s surprising providence in your life?
- Why do we think that somehow we can usually accurately interpret what The King of Glory is doing to reveal His glory in any situation? Is that arrogance or naiveté?
- In this encounter, Jesus’ love for Mary, Martha and Lazarus did not spare them adversity, pain and sorrow. How do you react to that in your heart, mind and soul? In responding, remember the immediate reassurance that Jesus sent back to Mary and Martha as soon as Jesus got their message.
- Mary and Martha seem to be subtly (or not so subtly) trying to manipulate Jesus in their message by reminding Jesus of His love for their brother. Ring any bells? Do we pray prayers of subtle (or not so subtle) manipulation to God?
- It seems to be a truism that when we define our expectation we have usually sowed the seeds of our own discouragement and discontent. Life seldom unfolds in the ways we hoped and dreamed it would. How can we live each day with a sense of expectancy of what God might do, while at the same time not creating a rigid expectation of when and how He should do it?
- Where did the Holy Spirit nudge you and challenge you as you journeyed through this chapter?

A Point to Ponder

This case history of Mary, Martha and Lazarus, real people dealing with the real circumstances of life, reminds us that we need to be extremely cautious when reacting to situations that don’t seem to be working out according to our desired timetables. Whether it relates to a single person long awaiting for a spouse, a childless couple laboring through the frustrations of infertility, an unemployed person still anxiously waiting for a new job, we all seem to have our own implicit endpoints for these “delays” when our souls want to cry out to God, “Enough is enough!”

We are usually willing to accommodate, or even tolerate some “delay” in God’s timing, as long as it seems to be a reasonable period of time (as defined by us). We are even good at rationalizing these kinds of delays and even assigning to them a redemptive faith-building quality because we want these waiting times to make sense. But what happens when our fourth-day arrives? When none of it makes sense anymore? When our situation now seems to be somewhere between utterly bleak and totally hopeless?

During those “desperate” times, we need to be very careful about drawing any lines in the sand with respect to God’s timing and our willingness to accept it. If we do, we might well be instigating our own crisis of faith. We always have a choice in how we decide to respond to the “adversity” in our lives. A seasoned faith in God chooses to respond by intentionally resting the purpose and meaning of our lives in the perfection of His all wise, all knowing, all loving nature and timing.

One of the many dividends of heaven will be that not only will all of the “why” questions of our lives be answered, but God’s purpose in them will become praise-worthy clear. Not only will we then see all the events of our lives through the rear view mirror of the impeccable providence of God’s Sovereignty, but we will also eternally rejoice in them. We will celebrate God’s timing because we will then fully see how all those deliberate “delays” and waiting periods in our lives served to reveal His glory to others. In fact, God Ordained “Delay” is an essential part of every disciple’s faith-building journey. The acrostic of GOD can remind us of that!