

# Grounded in Grace

## LIVING IN-BETWEEN HURT, HOPE AND HEALING PT 8

*Jesus loved Martha, and her sister and Lazarus. “Yet (Therefore) when he heard that Lazarus was sick he stayed where he was two more days.”*

*John 11:4*

### **The Delay in Grace**

We have already seen Mary and Martha’s questioning spirit turn from doubt and disbelief to faith and seeing the Savior in a most glorious way. But what they didn’t know and what we are privileged to now understand is the purpose of Lazarus’ death. Let’s go back and look at a few more details.

### **A Relationship of Love**

“Lord, the one you love is sick” was reported to Jesus. John gives us an incredible insight into their relationship. We knew that Mary and Martha loved Jesus. But here we also find out that Jesus had a special relationship with all of them as well. He loved them. He had a special relationship with them. They also had an intimate relationship with him. They knew Jesus. And Jesus knew them. He also knew they were hurting and that their brother was very sick. He was wanted and needed immediately. Therefore, one would think that he would have went immediately to attend to their needs.” However, that is not what it says. If you love someone, wouldn’t you go and find out how you can help? If I was writing the Gospel, I would have made sure that Jesus went as quickly as possible to the comfort and aid of his good friends. But God is the author of his Gospel and that is not is what happened.

### **The Delay of Love**

“We see an incredible verse when we read, “Yet (therefore) when he heard that Lazarus was sick he stayed where he was two more days.” The meaning can be more definitively translated as “therefore” or the reason that Jesus stayed where he was and did not immediately come is because he loved Lazarus. He loved him! In this verse we see the timing of God but even more so the mystery of God. Jesus understood the dire circumstances but he chose to stay away. Jesus didn’t let the needs of men, even of those whom he loved, dictate his eternal plans. Jesus’ timing would be perfect even if it seemed that it was the worst possible thing to do.

Let's look back for a minute. If Jesus would have come when they called, Mary and Martha would have never seen the compassion of the Lord. They would not have felt his calming touch or heard his tender words of assurance that Lazarus would rise again. If Jesus had come, Mary and Martha would have never seen Jesus' tears. They also would have never seen the power of his humanity. If Jesus had come, they would not have seen the miracle of a resurrection. They would not have seen their own tears of pain turn into tears of joy nor would they have seen a preview of his resurrection to come.

**The power of Jesus' delay is not about our temporal needs being met but is about the eternal needs of our souls being transformed.**

### **The Glory of Delayed Love**

"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." John 11:4

Both the glory of the Son and his perfect timing were evident on that day. In order for Mary, Martha, the disciples, and the rest of the community to see the Son glorified, Jesus stayed away for two more days. In those two days there were pain and death but glory was on the horizon. Jesus allowed these events to happen in order for him to be exalted through them. God's purposes go way beyond just taking our pain away. Sometimes his purposes take us through pain so we will get a glimpse of his grace. But ultimately, every situation is to bring us closer to him and for us to see his glory shine through dire circumstances. The power of Jesus' delay is not about our temporal needs being met but is about the eternal needs of our souls being transformed.

If we are able to view all our circumstances from a redemptive perspective, we are able to see that God is using all things (even our pain) to bring transformation of our souls. It doesn't mean that we don't hurt or sin doesn't do its damage. However, it does mean that God is mysteriously working to bring transformation and a deeper understanding not only of our souls but the very heart of God.

Can you see that maybe he is answering something deeper and more significant than your temporal need and bringing your soul to a deeper understanding of his transforming power?

By Dr. Steve Benson