

JESUS

IF YOU WERE HERE

(John 11:21–27; 32–44)

*"Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died."
(John 11:21)*

INTRODUCTION

A little boy once stood beside his father's hospital bed. The machines had fallen silent. His father had died despite weeks of earnest prayer.

Through tears, the boy whispered to his mother, *"Did Jesus know where Daddy was?"*

His mother knelt beside him and replied, *"Yes, son. Jesus knew exactly where Daddy was. The harder question is whether we believe He also knew what He was doing."*

That is where faith often struggles; not with God's power, but with His timing.

Martha's words echo through every generation: *"Lord, if You had been here..."*

"If You had been here, my marriage wouldn't have failed." "If You had been here, I wouldn't have lost my job." "If You had been here, cancer wouldn't have

come." "If You had been here, my child wouldn't have died."

Her statement was both a confession of faith and a limitation of faith.

She believed Jesus **could** prevent death. She did not yet believe Jesus could conquer it.

Many of us still make the same mistake. We trust Christ's presence when everything goes according to plan, but we question His presence when life falls apart.

HIS DELAY DOES NOT MEAN HIS ABSENCE

Jesus did something that seems almost cruel.

- He stayed where He was.
- He intentionally delayed for two more days.

Yet John tells us something remarkable: *"Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. So... He stayed two more days..." (John 11:5–6)*

Notice that Scripture does **not** say, *"He loved them but He delayed."*

It says, "*He loved them so He delayed.*" Just the way He loved them during the tempest and also delayed.

His delay was an expression of love, not neglect.

Sometimes God loves us enough *not* to rescue us immediately.

Sometimes He allows the storm because He intends to reveal Himself in the storm.

Analogy

A surgeon who delays closing an incision is not trying to hurt the patient. He is trying to remove every trace of the disease. Quick relief is not always complete healing.

God often works like that.

GOD'S SILENCE IS OFTEN PREPARING A GREATER REVELATION

Before Lazarus died, Jesus could have been known merely as **Healer**.

After Lazarus died...He became known as **the Resurrection and the Life**
John 11:25.

Had Jesus arrived earlier...Lazarus would have recovered.

By arriving later...Death itself had to surrender.

Some miracles require deeper valleys.

Consider the Cross

Where was God when Jesus was nailed to the cross? Exactly where He had always been.

The Father did not abandon His purpose. The silence of Heaven was not the absence of God.

It was the unfolding of redemption and Chose to become part of human suffering.

Hence whatsoever it is that a man goes through, He's gone through worse on the cross while His father watched.

Sometimes God's silence is simply the sound of Him accomplishing something we cannot yet see.

WE OFTEN CONFUSE GOD'S INVISIBILITY WITH HIS ABSENCE

Clouds can hide the sun. They never remove it.

A child asleep in the back seat may think the driver has disappeared because he cannot see him.

Yet the unseen driver is guiding every mile. Likewise, God's presence is not measured by our feelings.

His promises are more reliable than our emotions.

David declared: **"Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for You are with me."**

Notice: God did not remove the valley. He accompanied David through it.

Martha Vs The Centurion

- **Martha** (a close friend of Jesus, a Jew, and one who had witnessed His miracles) said, **"Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died"** (*John 11:21*).

Her faith was genuine but largely tied to Jesus' **physical presence**.

- **The centurion** (a Gentile, a Roman officer, and an outsider to Israel's covenant) said, **"Only speak a word, and my servant will be healed"** (*Matthew 8:8*).

His faith recognized Jesus' **absolute authority over distance**.

Based on privilege, relationship, and knowledge, **Martha should have exhibited the deeper faith.**

She had greater access to Jesus and His ministry. Yet it was the Gentile centurion who demonstrated the greater faith, prompting Jesus to say, **"I have not found such great faith, even in Israel"** (Matthew 8:10).

Lesson: Proximity to Jesus does not automatically produce deeper faith.

Faith is measured not by how close we are to Christ physically or religiously, but by how completely we trust His word.

Tis so sweet to trust in Jesus...

SOMETIMES WE ARE THE ONES WHO LEAVE GOD'S PRESENCE

Not every hardship is caused by our choices. But many unnecessary sorrows are.

- Adam hid.
- Jonah ran.
- The prodigal son departed.
- Peter followed "at a distance."

None of them lost God's knowledge of them. They lost the comfort of walking with Him.

Sin promises freedom but produces distance. Repentance restores fellowship.

When we choose independence from God, we

should not be surprised if life feels emptier.

GOD'S GREATEST PURPOSE IS NOT OUR COMFORT BUT HIS GLORY

Jesus explained why He delayed.

"This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God..." (John 11:4).

Lazarus still died. But death did not have the final word.

God's glory was larger than their immediate comfort. That truth is difficult. Yet it is also comforting.

If God is working for His glory, then our suffering is never meaningless.

Every tear can become part of His testimony. Every trial can become a platform for His power.

CONCLUSION

Martha believed Jesus had arrived too late.

She discovered that the One she thought had missed the funeral had actually scheduled the resurrection.

Perhaps someone today has been saying, *"Jesus, if You had been here..."*

But perhaps Jesus is saying,

- "I was there when you cried.

- I was there when they walked away.
- I was there when the doctor spoke.
- I was there when you buried your dreams.
- And I am still here."

The greatest miracle in **John 11** was not that Lazarus walked out of the tomb.

The greatest miracle was that Christ proved ***He is present even when death appears to have won***.

The cross reminds us that God's presence does not always prevent suffering.

The empty tomb reminds us that suffering never has the final word.

So when life tempts you to say, *"Jesus, if You were here..."* Answer your own heart with His promise: *"I will never leave you nor forsake you." (Hebrews 13:5)*

He may seem silent. He may seem delayed. But He is never absent.

The God who stood outside Lazarus' tomb still stands beside His people today—and His presence is enough until His purpose is complete.