

Sermon from the Gospel of John
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HE COULD HAVE, BUT HE WOULD NOT (WHEN DELAY SEEMS LIKE DENIAL)

TEXT: John 11:32-37

INTRODUCTION

It was a terrible day, Lazarus was dead. The windows had been shut and Laughter had deserted the threshold in that little house in Bethany . Lazarus was dead.

Family and friends walked upon silent threads and talked in hush tones. Lazarus was dead. The family circle had been broken. Jesus did not come according to their schedule, He shows up late.

In the minds of all those who worked hard for the "success" of the funeral Jesus was late. In the minds of the mourners He was not just late, He was ungodly late. He didn't just miss the opening song... or the reading of the obituary. He missed the whole funeral. He is four days late and this is about the late as you can be to a funeral.

Even though the home of Lazarus, Mary and Martha was a healthy and happy home; stress, strain, Sickness and suffering invaded their ranks. If this text teaches anything, it teaches that **EVEN THE FRIENDS OF JESUS GET SICK SOME TIMES**. Lazarus became sick, and his sickness nigh unto death. He

became sick enough that they sent word to Jesus. “Master He whom thou lovest is sick. Sick enough to die”.

I can only image the conversational dialogue between Mary and Martha. Martha tells Mary not to worry, Jesus knows Lazarus is sick... His love for Lazarus and respect for us will make a trip to Bethany a priority.

Even though they prayed, they watched and prayed. They waited and prayed. Two days has passed and they have not heard from Jesus. I hear them try to comfort each other, Have you heard anything from Jesus, yet? Martha Jesus has to come or we will lose Lazarus. He is almost gone!

I can imagine Martha though worried herself said, “He will be here, I don’t know where he is. I don’t know what’s keeping Him. Even though He is cutting it close this time. We must believe as the master has taught us and just believe he will come soon. Even though they hoped against hope, Jesus didn’t come and Lazarus died.

We are discussing this story this morning because we find ourselves in similar situations with God. We put God on a schedule and reason that when he does not meet our timeline, he is too late or is taking too much time. This message is designed to discuss and correct that faulty theology by reminding us that the God of heaven is an ON TIME GOD.

You need to understand two things before you will grasp that concept, and I want to use them as foundational stones on which to build this sermonic castle.

THE FORCE OF HIS PRESENCE

THE COURSE OF HIS PROVISIONS... makes him an on time God.

THE FORCE OF HIS PRESENCE

A. GOD IS THE CREATOR OF TIME

GOD IS SO AWESOME...*That He was somewhere before somewhere became somewhere.*

GOD IS SO AWESOME...That before there was a then and a there, after or a before, why or a wherefore there was God.

GOD IS SO AWESOME...That He created everything from nothing, And sees the afters before the before.

GOD IS SO AWESOME...*That He just spoke a word and nothing became something*

GOD IS SO AWESOME...That He just commanded and nowhere became somewhere

GOD IS SO AWESOME...*That He just declared and naked darkness clothed himself with a garment of light*

Moses was right Psalms 90:1,2 *“Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations.(2) 2 Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God.*

God is not just the creator of time,

B. GOD EXIST OUTSIDE OF TIME

Before time was ever an issue God existed. God existed before time, therefore He is not affected by time.

God is not bound by time, although he enters it and dwells within it, he lives outside of it.

God does not get old nor does He get tired. God does not have to take a nap or rest. Which explain why he never slumbers nor sleep.

He is like book ends that encloses time. He is in front of time and behind time. He is Alpha and Omega.

If God does not exist inside of time, then we can never say He is not on time when He shows up.

How can a God who does not exist in time take too long? There is no such thing as fashionably late with God.

How can a God who embodies all wisdom and knowledge ever be late?

How can God who existed before the clock started, show up late.

He's right on time. It may not be our time, but He is always on time.

God is the creator of time, God exist outside of time

C. GOD DEFINES TIME ACCORDING TO HIS WILL

Man lives under the constraints of time and circumstances. To us, time is critical. If we are sick, we must get treatment fast. The earlier we get treatment, the higher the chance of recovery and healing.

Jesus shows us we have a God who rules time and space. He is in control of time and circumstances. No delay is a delay to Him because He is sovereign. That means, He does as he pleases, when He pleases, the way He pleases and for whomever He pleases. Nothing can stop God from DOING HIS WILL, fulfilling His purpose AND GETTING HIS GLORY.

God has everything, OWNS everything, SUSTAINS everything, CONTROLS everything, and IS everything. This means that.. God can do anything God wants to, how God wants to, when God wants to, where God wants to, because God is sovereign. IF GOD IS NOT GOD OVER ALL, HE IS NOT GOD AT ALL.

1. Yaweh, the self existent God can send a hurricane or tornado that tears down building, uproots trees, destroy multimillion dollars worth of property, and nobody can charge God with destruction of property; because God is sovereign GOD ALL BY HIMSELF.
2. God can send His lighting that will connect with another electrical current that will set a whole city on fire and nobody can arrest him for

being a firebug or arsonist; because God is sovereign GOD ALL BY HIMSELF.

3. God can unloose His wind that blows faster and harder than any supersonic jet and nobody, no highway patrolman can arrest God for breaking the speed limit; because God is sovereign GOD ALL BY HIMSELF.
4. God when we do wrong whips us as long and as hard as He wants and nobody can charge him with child abuse; because God is sovereign GOD ALL BY HIMSELF.
5. He can give us what he wants us to have and that he doesn't want us to have, He doesn't have to give it to us and no judge can summon God to appear in court and charge him with parental delinquency; because God is sovereign GOD ALL BY HIMSELF.
6. God when he gets tired of a nation's wicked ways, sends another nation to whip them back in line and sometimes he destroys them himself, and no summit conference can be called to be asked God why he did it; because God is sovereign GOD ALL BY HIMSELF.
7. God will give a mother and a father children and then take the children away, or God will take the mother and father and leave the children motherless and fatherless and nobody charge God with desertion or child neglect; because God is sovereign GOD ALL BY HIMSELF.

God is the creator of time,

God exist outside of time

God defines time by navigating time according to his will

THE COURSE OF HIS PROVIDENCE

A. HIS DELAY DOES NOT MEAN DENIAL, UNCONCERN OR REJECTION, it just means He is sovereign.

He uses providence to execute his sovereign will. The word "Providence" is an interesting word. The base word in providence is the word "pro-vidē" pro-before and vi-de (where we get the word video) which means to see. To provide literally means to see to before hand.

Nothing can stop God from DOING HIS WILL, fulfilling His purpose AND GETTING HIS GLORY. The theological construct found in this Biblical narrative is not just that God is Good, or that God is great; but even more so, GOD IS GOD!

Jesus is teaching us that God's will is to be done on earth as it is in heaven. After all Matthew recorded Him teaching his disciples to pray in Matt. 6:9, 10

John the beloved now illustrates that Jesus always practices what he preaches. Let me confess before I take my seat that this theological construct is deeper than deep. I don't just want to be poetically eloquent, I must also be theologically sound, contemptuously relevant and therapeutically helpful.

To be theologically sound and biblically accurate the WILL OF GOD is three dimensional.

1. THE PERFECT WILL OF GOD is that you might be glorified II Pet. 3:9 "The Lord...."

THE PERFECT WILL OF GOD is that you might be glorified in the after while bye and bye, but that God might also be glorified in you in the nasty here and now. To glorify means to embellish, to make look good. To embellish means to put God on display and make him look good to the people who do not know him as God, even in the most adverse circumstances.

2. THE PRIMARY WILL OF GOD is that you might be sanctified. 1 Thess. 4:3,4 makes that plain *"For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication: (4) that every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour."*

To be sanctified is to be set apart, and dedicated to the purpose of God in spite of doubt, disease, difficulty and disaster.

3. THE PERMISSIVE WILL OF GOD that you might be VICTIMIZED. I
Pet. 4:14-19

The bad things in your life are not always a result of bad things in your heart. Bad things do happen even to good people. God does not necessarily cause, but he permits things to happen for our growth and his glory

COME A LITTLE CLOSER:

God may choose what we go through; we choose HOW we go through it .

There is a troubling and confusing statement in Jno 11:14, 155. The statement is LAZARUS IS DEAD AND I'M GLAD ABOUT IT.

That statement is even more confusing in light of what he said in verses 5,6. “ (5) *Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. (6) So when He heard that he was sick, He then stayed two days longer in the place where He was.*

THE DISCIPLES OF JESUS HAD TO BE CONFUSED BY THAT STATEMENT. "Lord, we don't understand how you are treating your friends. Lazarus is your friend. In fact, we know their house is a regular rest place for you. You eat there often and rest there regularly.

This is the same Mary who washed your feet with expensive oil, and got on her knees dried them with her hair.

Lord, they let you sleep in the guest room.

They changed the sheets, pillow cases, made sure the ceiling fan was working when you visited.

Lord, they even got the carpet cleaned when they knew you were coming.

At dinner they gave you the best and biggest part of the chicken.

They made you Red Kook Aid and peach cobbler

They even sat there and listened to all your sermons from start to finish.

THESE ARE THE SAME FOLK, sending for you because their brother, your friend is dying. You say you love them, but you are in no hurry to get there. You don't bother to go or explain why you won't. I DON'T MEAN NO DISRESPECT, BUT LORD, THAT'S A STRANGE KIND OF LOVE”.

“Lord, we have seen you have more compassion and sympathy for strangers than you are showing for your friends

(1) You didn't even know the host of that wedding feast in Canaan of Galilee, but at the urging of your mother, when the wine ran out, rather than see the host embarrassed, you turned water into wine.

(2) You had never met blind Bartemaeus, and yet you had compassion on him and gave him sight.

(3) You restored sanity to a man who was bent on self-destruction in a lonely grave yard.

(4) You gave life and vitality to dying trees and made lame men walk and dumb men talk.

(5) Yet, Your friend is dying and you take days before you even try to get there”.

AT THE RISK OF REPEATING MYSELF, LET ME REPEAT MYSELF. HIS DELAY DOES NOT MEAN DENIAL, UNCONCERN OR REJECTION, it just means He is sovereign. He uses providence to execute his sovereign will.

Because He is God even when it looks like Stress Stain, sorrow, Sin, Satan, and Suffering has the last word, it ain't over until God says it's over— BECAUSE IF HE IS NOT GOD OVER ALL, HE IS NOT GOD AT ALL.

Jesus is teaching us, “If I had saved him from death a few believers would have believed in my power and glorified God in thanksgiving, but because I raised him from the dead, many believed and glorified God in Obedience”.

In the grand scheme of things is it better to strengthen the faith of a few believers or to convert unbelievers? John 12:1,9 confirms the answer. “*Then Jesus six days before the Passover came to Bethany, where Lazarus was which had been dead, whom he raised from the dead, (9) Much people of the Jews therefore knew that he was there; and they came not for Jesus sake only, but that they might see Lazarus also, whom he had raised from the dead*”.

ILLUSTRATION: I hold in my hand a watch that carries with it, great sentimental value. It is a gold watch with diamonds displayed for every number. It's solid gold and was given to me as an anniversary gift from my wife. There is a reason why I pulled it out of my coat pocket and it is not displayed on my arm. YOU'VE FIGURED IT OUT, HAVEN'T YOU. It's a beautiful gold and diamond watch, but it doesn't work. I don't wear it any more because it doesn't keep time. It's stuck on 2:00, so even when it's 1:00 in the morning my watch says 2:00. If its 10:00 in the morning my watch still says 2:00. If it's 6:00 in the afternoon my watch still says it's 2:00.

No matter what time it is my watch doesn't care, because it has it's own time.

THE LORD SENT ME HERE TO TELL YOU .. it doesn't do you any good to be in a hurry or try to rush God, because he has his own time. You need to be like my watch and get stuck on god's time instead of your own time.

What do you do when God seems to take too long? YOU WAIT!

Psa. 27:14 Wait on the Lord; Be of good courage, And He shall strengthen your heart; Wait, I say, on the Lord! NKJV

Wait on the Lord, don't fret, don't fear, don't fall apart, just wait on the Lord. He will make it alright after while. Yes, oh yes, hallelujah yes, He will make it alright after while.

The old folks were right God may not come when you want Him but He is always on time. He is always on time, in time, all the time. But he might not act according to your time.

CONCLUSION

HE SHOWS UP TO SHOW OFF HIS POWER

Dottie People was right when she sang the words to her popular song:

He's an on time God, yes, He is.

Job said, He may not come when you want Him,
but He'll be there right on time;

I tell ya He's an on time God, yes, He is.

Whenever he shows up, Manna falls from Heaven

Whenever he shows up, Empty nets are filled.

Whenever he shows up, Enemies are subdued

Whenever he shows up, Meal-barrels are filled

Whenever he shows up, Oil is increased in the crude

Whenever he shows up, The night of failure is replaced by the morning
of success.

HE SHOWS UP TO SHOW OFF HIS POWER

Whenever he shows up, Midnight is turned to mid-day

Whenever he shows up, Refreshing water breaks forth in the parching
desert.

Whenever he shows up, nightmares become sweet dreams

HE SHOWS UP TO SHOW OFF HIS POWER

Whenever he shows up, falling tears are dried

Whenever he shows up, Feeble knees are strengthened

Whenever he shows up, Heavy hearts are made light

Whenever he shows up, Sighing turns into singing

HE SHOWS UP TO SHOW OFF HIS POWER

Quit trembling and start trusting

Quit pouting and start praising

Quit running and start resting

Quit bemoaning and start believing

Quit worrying and start waiting

Psa. 27:14 Wait on the Lord; Be of good courage, And He shall strengthen your heart; Wait, I say, on the Lord! NKJV

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