

## John 11 1-7

This morning we are in chapter 11 of John. This chapter has the very familiar story of the greatest sign miracle of the Gospel of John aside the actual death and resurrection of Jesus Christ Himself. It is the resurrection of Lazarus. We know the story well. I remember when I was in RA's, one of the weekly things we did was to memorize a Bible verse. One of the first verses memorized by everyone is John 11:35, "Jesus wept."

This is a wonderful chapter for many reasons. One thing that stands out in this chapter is the combination of one of Jesus' "I am" statements with a sign miracle.

However, we must not hurry to the sign miracle itself. We must look at some of the details of this story leading up to the sign miracle. For in the details, we find God facts that become points of encouragement for us who are believers. For non-believers, these God facts become more evidence presented to you as to why you should also become a believer. Through these sermons, perhaps God will call you, and draw you into His kingdom.

This morning, I want us to unpack the early verses to find the God fact of the glory of God. We will give attention to another God fact next Sunday.

Let's read the verses. I want to start with verse 1 and read down to verse 7 for this morning.

*<sup>1</sup> Now a certain man was sick, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha.*

*<sup>2</sup> It was the Mary who anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped His feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick.*

*<sup>3</sup> So the sisters sent word to Him, saying, "Lord, behold, he whom You love is sick."*

*<sup>4</sup> But when Jesus heard this, He said, "This sickness is not to end in death, but for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified by it."*

*<sup>5</sup> Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus.*

*<sup>6</sup> So when He heard that he was sick, He then stayed two days longer in the place where He was.*

*<sup>7</sup> Then after this He \*said to the disciples, "Let us go to Judea again."*

The key verse for this morning is verse 4. But when Jesus heard this, He said, "This sickness is not to end in death, but for this sickness is for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified by it."

The glory of God is one of those things often talked about but really never defined. I guess it is more or less thought to be understood of what it is. How would you define the glory of God?

During Christmas time, we talked of the radiance of the glory of Jesus of His glory shown in the first Christmas.

John Piper gives this definition of the glory of God.

The glory of God is the infinite beauty and greatness of God's manifold perfections.

There is a lot in that statement, but it is a pretty good definition. It is infinite in that there is no end to His beauty and greatness of God's manifold perfections, multifaceted perfections. It is like the perfect diamond.

When God reveals His character, He glorifies Himself in that. The radiant greatness of God is magnified in that character. When God is revealed as holy, the radiance greatness of God is magnified in His holiness. The glory of His justice. The glory of His righteousness. Psalm 19:1 the glory of God revealed in creation. The heavens declare the glory of God, the sky above reveals His handiworks.

Jesus was the agency through which creation came into being. The radiant greatness is revealed in creation.

The radiant greatness of God is revealed through the birth of Jesus. The angels cried out at the announcement of the birth of Jesus, "Glory to God in the Highest and on earth peace goodwill to all men."

In the early verses of John, we are given these words, "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten of the Father full of truth and grace. We were audience of the glory of God revealed through Jesus Christ.

Jesus revealed the glory of God. The radiant greatness of God is revealed in Jesus Christ. That is what He was trying to tell the Pharisees in chapter 10. When they saw the works of Jesus, they saw the works of God. His works and His teaching revealed the glory of God. They were too blind by their own hatred and jealousy to see it.

The question I want to pose to us today is this. How does God reveal His glory to us today? I think we will find the answer to that question as we consider these five or six verses.

There is a relationship between the revealing of God's glory and love. What is meant by love? That's the key question.

### **Human Love**

This element of love existed between Jesus and this family, Mary, Martha, and Lazarus. Notice the content of the message sent to Jesus by the sisters. "Lord, he whom you love is ill." End of message. What was the implied message? If you love Lazarus, then come and heal him.

Human love is conditional. Human love is limiting. That is how many approach Jesus today. God, if you love me, then let this happen. I have met at least two persons who are angry at God because He did not meet their demands and conditions. That sounds strange doesn't it? We're going to demand something from God?

One lady I knew had a wonderful singing voice. She was sharing her talents with churches, singing in services and even doing concerts. When her mother fell ill to terminal cancer, she was convinced that God was going to heal her of the cancer, and thus show His glory in her mother through the physical healing. When the mother died, this lady was so disappointed, she never sang again. She hardly ever went to church again. God disappointed her because He did not meet her condition.

Our human love puts conditions on God. That in itself is daring enough. We, mere humans, are going to put conditions on the Sovereign God?

Our human love also puts limits on what we expect of God. It puts God in a box. We limit our expectations of God to what we know He can do. Mary and Martha knew Jesus had the ability to

heal. After all, He did just heal a man born blind. If He can heal a man born blind, then surely He can rid Lazarus of this sickness that is sucking the life of him.

When God doesn't come through with our expectations of Him, we do get disappointed and ask, "Why?"

Why does he allow young people we know to be taken away from us in death when there is so much life, and promise of a productive, bright future where they can contribute much back to our community?

Why does he not choose to allow a disease to be healed?

Do we put too much emphasis on our human love in relation to God's glory? I have to admit, I'm guilty of it also.

There is another kind of love that is found in these verses. Notice what the Apostle John is inspired by the Holy Spirit to write in verse 4-6.

<sup>4</sup> But when Jesus heard *this*, He said, "This sickness is not to end in death, but for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified by it."

<sup>5</sup> Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus.

<sup>6</sup> So when He heard that he was sick, He then stayed two days *longer* in the place where He was.

We read verse 4 without reading the other two verses.. We are alright with that. We assume Jesus immediately leaves to see about his friend. We read verse 5. We are still alright with that. But then we comes to verse 6.

"So (Huge word, can mean therefore) So when He heard that he was sick, He then stayed there for two more days!" Let me put it another way. Because Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus, when he heard he was sick, He stayed two more days.

That's not love, is it? What does it mean when John says, "Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus? That's the question!

### **Divine Love**

It's a different Greek word that the love given in the message of verse 3.

What does it mean for Jesus to love us with the divine love?

Jesus loved not only the sisters and brother, but also His disciples so much that instead of healing Lazarus, he lets him die. How is that love? It's love because Jesus has something better for them. It is love because Jesus wants them to see the glory of God displayed in new, powerful way so that they will experience a greater joy, and grow into a stronger faith in Him.

John Piper writes, "Love means giving us what we need most. What we need most is...a full and endless experience of the glory of God. Love means giving us what will bring us the fullest and longest joy. And what is that? What will give you full and eternal joy? The answer of this text is clear: a revelation to your soul of the glory of God — seeing, admiring, and marveling at and savoring the radiant greatness of God in Jesus Christ. When someone is willing to die — or let your brother die — to give you (and your brother) *that*, he loves you.

This enables us by faith to look for how God will reveal His glory even in the tragedies of human experience. How have I seen His glory in the tragedies of human experience?

I have seen people introduced to Jesus Christ because of the spiritual strength some of our people have displayed in suffering.

I have seen young people's lives changed some even becoming ministers through tragedies of human experience.

I will never forget the man in Westlake, Louisiana whose faith in Christ was so strong and love for his own brothers so strong, he prayed this prayer. "I pray for my brothers to become believers in you, even if it means my death."

A few years later, this man died. God was so glorified in the aftermath of this man's life that both brothers are now believers.

I have seen God give to individuals with physical disabilities power to overcome and do things that were beyond reasonable expectation. The only way it can be explained is God's power in them.  
Greater Act of Divine Love

There was even a greater act of divine love done that enables the greater experience of God's glory.

It also involved a death. It is best identified and understood in one verse of scripture. For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

Divine love—While were still sinners, Christ died for us.  
Greatest glory—we have everlasting life.  
Christ Jesus is the hope, the certainty of glory.

In between Lazarus' death and His being raised four days later, his family could not see how God was going to reveal His glory. But reveal it, He did. You may be at that point of in between. You have not yet seen how God will reveal His glory. He will. But as you wait, trust Him, and treasure Him above all.