When Prayer Goes Unanswered

John 11:1-16

Introduction:

John builds his Gospel around seven miracles:

Seven Signs

1. Water into wine - John 2

2. Healing of nobleman's son - John 4

3. Healing of man at pool of Bethesda - John 5

4. Feeding of 5,000 - John 6

5. Walking on water - John 6

6. Healing of blind man - John 9

7. Raising of Lazarus - John 11

The first and the last deal with a family

The First The Last

1. In Cana of Galilee 1. In Bethany, Judea

2. Turned water into wine. 2. Raised Lazarus from the dead

3. Creator of all things 3. Giver of life

4. A wedding (gladdest hour) 4. A Funeral (saddest hour)

This final miracle, Raising Lazarus from the dead, gives the proof of His claim that He is the “Resurrection and the life”

The greatest horror that sin has produced is death,

﻿“Therefore, just as ﻿﻿through one man sin entered the world, and ﻿﻿death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned [in Adam].” (Rom. 5:12)

Physical death is the divine object lesson of what sin does in the spiritual realm. As physical death is a lack of physical life and separates people, so spiritual death is the separation of people from God and a lack of spiritual life. Paraphrase of (BKC, Ed. Blum, en-loc)

Bethany was a town on the eastern slope of The Mount of Olives. Jesus was teaching east of the Jordon. {Map Please}

From the last chapter we learned that there were only a few months until Jesus would go back to Jerusalem for the feast of Passover and there He would be crucified.

I. The Lord and His Friends – 11:1-6

A. Special Family – 11:1-2

“Now a certain *man* was sick, Lazarus of Bethany, the town of ﻿﻿Mary and her sister Martha.”

1. Martha the Sister of Mary - More about her later in the chapter.

2. Mary who Anointed Jesus Feet – 11:2

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﻿﻿“It was *that* Mary who anointed the Lord with fragrant oil and wiped His feet with her hair,”

3. Lazarus – Brother

John has not mentioned Lazarus before whose brother Lazarus was sick. We are not told what the illness was, but they had probably tried some of their remedies or even called a doctor. Remember Luke was a doctor.

B. Sudden Fear – 11:3

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“Therefore, the sisters sent to Him, saying, “Lord, behold, he whom You love (φιλεῖς) is sick.” -- φιλεῖς – brotherly love

They are making this request regarding their brothers condition:

1. Jesus loves him. They are right!

2. An implied statement, “You can heal him.”

They know that because He has healed others. They apparently have not gone beyond that. That is as far as they need to go. Those are two good reasons.

C. Seeming Failure – 11:4-6

1. The Lord’s Logic – 11:4

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“When Jesus heard *that,* He said, “This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified through it.”

Note that Jesus does not say that Lazarus would not die, but that the results of this sickness will not end up in death. God has a plan that they are not aware of. Having read ahead, we know how this is going to work out, but they don’t know yet.

They do have an example in their Scriptures:

Job experienced forty-one chapters of suffering because God was teaching Satan a lesson. He lost everything he had, sheep, camels, donkeys and oxen, plus 7 sons and 3 daughters. But the book has 42 chapters. In that last chapter, God gave him back double of all his lost possessions, plus 7 more sons and 3 daughters more beautiful than all the other women in the land.

2. The Lord’s Love - 5﻿

“Now Jesus loved ἀγαπάω Martha and her sister and Lazarus.”

They were right about Jesus’ love. He loved all three of them. Also the world, with the same love (ἀγαπάω).

3. The Lord’s Leading – 11:6

“So, when He heard that he was sick, ﻿﻿He stayed two more days in the place where He was.”

He did not rush to their house. He was working His plan that He alone knew at this point. Have you ever been there? You pray and nothing changes? God is working out His plan. The results may not be known to us for a while or not at all.

II. The Lord and His Followers – 11:7-16

A. The Decision – 11:7-10

“Then after this He said to *the* disciples, “Let us go to Judea again.”

Jesus is not talking about Jerusalem. There iks a mountain between Bethany and Jerusalem.

“The disciples said to Him, “Rabbi, lately the Jews sought to ﻿﻿stone You, and are You going there again?”

“Jesus answered, “Are there not twelve hours in the day? ﻿﻿If anyone walks in the day, he does not stumble, because he sees the ﻿﻿light of this world. But ﻿﻿if one walks in the night, he stumbles, because the light is not in him.”

B. The Discussion – 11:11-15

1. What Jesus Exclaimed – 11:11-13

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“These things He said, and after that He said to them, “Our friend Lazarus ﻿﻿sleeps, [κεκοίμηται·] but I go that I may wake him up.”

﻿“Then His disciples said, “Lord, if he sleeps he will get well.”

However, Jesus spoke of his death, but they thought that He was speaking about taking rest in sleep.

2. What Jesus Explained – 11:14-15

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“Then Jesus said to them plainly, “Lazarus is dead. [ἀπέθανεν]

And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, that you may believe. Nevertheless let us go to him.”

C. The Disciples – 11:16

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“Then ﻿﻿Thomas, who is called the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, “Let us also go, that we may die with Him.”

For the God on the mountain, is the God in the valley. When things go wrong, He'll make them right. And the God of the good times is still God in the bad times. The God of the day is still God in the night.