

Friday, May 29, 2020

Devotional Thoughts from Pastor Jim Murr...

"Now a certain man was ill, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha ... So the sisters sent to him, saying, 'Lord, he whom you love is ill.' Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. So, when he heard that Lazarus was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was."

John 11: 1ff

You may remember this story of the death of Lazarus. At first, Lazarus was just sick. This was when his sisters sent word to Jesus asking him to come and heal him. But when Jesus heard about it, he intentionally waited until Lazarus died before he went to where he was. By the time Jesus arrived at Bethany, Lazarus had been in the tomb for four days. When Jesus did finally arrive, it was thought to have been too late because Lazarus had been dead for four days.

Do you remember the rest of the story? Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead! He called him out of the tomb. He said, "Lazarus, come out!" And he came out! So, what's the lesson of this story? Well, the first and primary lesson is found in the words that Jesus spoke to Martha: "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die." In other words, the resurrection is a reality for all who have believed in Jesus.

But there is a second lesson to be learned from this story, and that lesson is this: It is never too late for Jesus to do what he plans to do. It has to be very hard for all the people whose lives are changing because of the coronavirus pandemic. There has been, and likely still will be, economic fall-out for those who have lost their businesses or their jobs. Some are, no doubt, waiting and hoping that a vaccine is found before it is too late.

As someone who is not in their shoes at this point, I say this with a spirit of humility and gentleness: "Is it ever too late for God to bring about what is best for those who trust in Him?" Based on how Jesus handled the situation with Lazarus, I think the answer is a resounding, "No!" It is never too late for God to be God. Mary and Martha had both said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here, our brother would not have died." To them, death was the end of hope.

What an amazing God we have Who can call dead people from the grave!! If He can call dead people from the grave, is there anything He cannot do? Can He still fix a weakened economy? Can He bring families through financial hardship? Can He restore joy to those who have lost loved ones? I'm thinking, "Yes!"

Jesus told his disciples, "This illness does not lead to death. It is for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it." We can be assured that every circumstance of life will result in the Son of God being glorified through it, and those who trust in Him will see His glory and find peace and joy by seeing that glory.

God's peace!
Pastor Jim