

It's Not Supposed to Be This Way

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KEY:

Highlighted = put on screens

[OPENING ILLUSTRATION - It was NOT supposed to turn out like this]

- Maybe you're OVERWHELMED by the OUTCOME of life today . . . In Christ, you can **OVERCOME** the **OUTCOME** in your life!
- When we experience pain, grief or trauma it's important not to misappropriate our pain. The first step to finding healing is the understand which "Perpetrator" to blame for our pain. Blaming the wrong one could lead to years of getting stuck
 - (1) We live in a fallen and broken world
 - (2) Spiritual Attack (from a spiritual enemy)
 - (3) Other people's hurtful (or sinful) choices
 - (4) My own hurtful (or sinful) choices
- If we don't properly appropriate our pain and put it in the right bucket/s we could fail to learn lessons we need to for pain that's our fault, or take on unnecessary shame and secondary pain for pain that's NOT our fault.

Throughout this series we'll talk about each of these perpetrators.

Today we're going to talk about the first perpetrator of pain - A result of living in a fallen world.

1. REALIZATION

John 11:1

¹Now a man named Lazarus was sick. He was from Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. ²(This Mary, whose brother Lazarus now lay sick, was the same one who poured perfume on the Lord and wiped his feet with her hair.) ³So the sisters sent word to Jesus, "Lord, the one you love is sick."

- Lazarus was physically sick. But . . .
- You and I have a SPIRITUAL sickness called sin. This sickness will lead to death (**Romans 6:23**) . . . SIN IS AN IMPOSSIBLE HURDLE TO OVERCOME!
- This was a major burden to Mary and Martha! Lazarus was overwhelmed; Mary and Martha were overwhelmed! So they took it to Jesus . . . But Jesus' response is a little unexpected

John 11:4-6

⁴When he heard this, Jesus said, "This sickness will not end in death. No, it is for God's glory so that God's Son may be glorified through it." (In Christ not even death can kill you!) ⁵Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. ⁶So when he heard that Lazarus was sick, he stayed where he was two more days,

Jesus LOVED them, so He waited:

- The myth in church is that if God LOVES you he would never allow or cause any kind of overwhelming circumstance to hit your life
- Jesus never promised us this. In fact he told us "In this world you will have sorrow, but take heart, I have overcome the world." (John 16:33)
- Evil is here because sin entered into the world the Adam and Eve's sin and fractured the universe and now we are living in the fallout of that fracturing. Disease, famine, plague, sickness, crime all exist because of sin. Sin is the real problem and the only real solution to this is Jesus.
- WHY DIDN'T/DOESN'T HE PREVENT THIS?
 - If God is love and if He created us, He cannot force himself on us or anyone else. He created us with the freedom to receive Him or reject Him. He will not encroach on this freedom but unfortunately with that freedom comes the risk that people will reject Him. And as they reject Him they will violate His ways and other people will become victims of this.
 - God *sometimes* intervenes to PREVENT . . . We have no idea all the times God has intervened supernaturally to protect us, spare us, shelter us . . . but he *always* intervenes to PRODUCE
- Maybe he's bringing you to the point of death so he can resurrect it . . . SO THAT YOU REALIZE YOU NEED A SAVIOR!
- The greatest act of love in your life and mine is God bringing us to a point where we realize we NEED a savior!
- Mary and Martha got to the place where they realized they needed someone else to intervene
- *When was the point in your life where you realized YOU were spiritually sick and needed a savior??*

2. RESPONSE

a. Rejection

John 11:7-8

⁷and then he said to his disciples, "Let us go back to Judea." ⁸"But Rabbi," they said, "a short while ago the Jews there tried to stone you, and yet you are going back?"

- There were some seeking to put Jesus to death
- You need to understand that it's our SIN that murdered God's son! IT'S A BIG DEAL!
- Christ willingly put himself in harm's way to resurrect Lazarus (**PIC OF THE CROSS**). . . He entered into our suffering so that we might be set free from the pain of death!

- *Every other major religion states that you need to go through some kind of suffering to get to God, Christianity says, God was willing to go through suffering to get to you!*
- Jesus chose to walk into rejection . . . You may have rejected Jesus your whole life, but He still chooses to pursue you . . . that's why you're here today . . . He's knocking on the door of your heart once more!

Isaiah 53:4

⁴Surely he took up our pain and bore our suffering, yet we considered him punished by God, stricken by him, and afflicted.

b. Reason (Confusion/Doubt)

John 11:9-16

⁹Jesus answered, "Are there not twelve hours of daylight? Anyone who walks in the daytime will not stumble, for they see by this world's light. ¹⁰It is when a person walks at night that they stumble, for they have no light." ¹¹After he had said this, he went on to tell them, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep; but I am going there to wake him up." ¹²His disciples replied, "Lord, if he sleeps, he will get better." ¹³Jesus had been speaking of his death, but his disciples thought he meant natural sleep. ¹⁴So then he told them plainly, "Lazarus is dead, ¹⁵and for your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him." ¹⁶Then Thomas (also known as Didymus) said to the rest of the disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with him."

- Where were you when we went bankrupt? Where were you during the divorce? Where were you when the business failed? Where were you when we miscarried?
- Some here have let confusion become a stumbling block . . . I don't understand everything either, but I do know that Jesus raised from the dead and I'm following the guy who did that!

c. Relief

John 11:17-21

¹⁷On his arrival, Jesus found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days. ¹⁸Now Bethany was less than two miles from Jerusalem, ¹⁹and many Jews had come to Martha and Mary to comfort them in the loss of their brother. ²⁰When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went out to meet him, but Mary stayed at home. ²¹"Lord," Martha said to Jesus, "if you had been here, my brother would not have died."

- Jesus didn't even show up for the funeral! Not even an encouraging text!
- Coroners say 4 Days is when decay begins to set into the body. After 4 days there will have been so much decomposition that it could even be unrecognizable as a human body . . . deader than dead!

****MARY HAD GIVEN UP HOPE . . . MAYBE YOU'RE HERE TODAY AND YOU'VE GIVEN UP HOPE ON YOUR SITUATION**

- Mary and Martha had to feel abandoned by Jesus . . . What do you do when you feel abandoned? Do you look for RELIEF somewhere else?
- Alcohol, drugs, a dating or marriage relationship, a friendship, your job, your kids. . . all of these things will only put more of a burden on you!
- As long as you're looking to these things it will provide for you nothing but TEMPORARY RELIEF . . . it's as good as digging yourself a deeper grave
- We're looking for relief and Jesus wants to bring us RESURRECTION!
- Temporary Relief will never bring you LIFE

d. Religion

- Martha gives Jesus the "perfect" churchy answer (She was always BUSY)

John 11:22-27

²²But I know that even now God will give you whatever you ask." ²³Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again." ²⁴Martha answered, "I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day." ²⁵Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; ²⁶and whoever lives by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this?" ²⁷"Yes, Lord," she replied, "I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, who is to come into the world."

- You can have ALL THE RIGHT ANSWERS and still be in the grave . . . confirmation, baptism as a baby, going to church, etc.
- Religion only leads to EXHAUSTION!
- How are you responding to Jesus . . . Remember how Mary responded to Jesus? You have to do something with Him

John 11:28

²⁸After she had said this, she went back and called her sister Mary aside. "The Teacher is here," she said, "and is asking for you."

- Mary had given up on Jesus but Jesus hadn't given up on Mary
 - We can't call him just a good teacher. He's either a LIAR, a LUNATIC or He's LORD.
- You may be here and have given up on Jesus, but He hasn't given up on you!

John 11:33-35

³³ When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come along with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in spirit and troubled. ³⁴ "Where have you laid him?" he asked. "Come and see, Lord," they replied. ³⁵ Jesus wept.

- Jesus is saying, "this is not the way things were meant to be! I never wanted my creation to suffer and lose and grieve in this way."
- Here is the defining moment, where Jesus doesn't stand aloof to our pain but instead he entered into it. He subjected himself to the human condition, to hurt and grieve and lose alongside us.

- When all we want is an explanation, Jesus has a better answer - INCARNATION . . . Himself!
- He not only understands our pain, walks with us in our pain, and carries our pain, he became the ultimate answer in our pain by securing our victory on the cross and then raising from the dead.

3. Resurrection

- Jesus told them to roll the stone away
- No sickness, no situation, no PERSON is beyond salvation!
- Lazarus was dead 4 days . . . 4 days is when a body begins to decompose in the tomb

John 11:38-44

³⁸Jesus, once more deeply moved, came to the tomb. It was a cave with a stone laid across the entrance.

- There is a stone in your life right now that needs to be rolled away!
- God's answer to pain wasn't CONSOLATION, it was complete RESTORATION through the person of Jesus.

John 11:39-43

³⁹"Take away the stone," he said. "But, Lord," said Martha, the sister of the dead man, "by this time there is a bad odor, for he has been there four days." ⁴⁰Then Jesus said, "Did I not tell you that if you believe, (today is the day some of you BELIEVE) you will see the glory of God?" ⁴¹So they took away the stone. Then Jesus looked up and said, "Father, I thank you that you have heard me. ⁴²I knew that you always hear me, but I said this for the benefit of the people standing here, that they may believe that you sent me." ⁴³When he had said this, Jesus called in a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!"

- If you have never received Jesus as your Lord and Savior you may be tempted to make yourself Mary or Martha in this story. "Man I have some overwhelming circumstances that are over in this grave that I need Jesus to do something about" . . . If you've never received Jesus as your Lord and Savior, you're Lazarus, in the grave! You're SPIRITUALLY DEAD!!
- (Jesus is calling you by name in a loud voice today! He's calling you out of the tomb and wants to roll the stone of death away from your life)

John 11:44

⁴⁴The dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth around his face. Jesus said to them, "Take off the grave clothes and let him go." ("unbind him")