

## The Death of a Promise

**John 11:1-5 (KJV)** Now a certain man was sick, named Lazarus, of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha. [2] (It was that Mary which anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick.) [3] Therefore his sisters sent unto him, saying, Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick. [4] When Jesus heard that, he said, This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby.

- Jesus had given a promise (“this sickness is not unto death”), but then things seemingly took a wrong turn and Lazarus died. Jesus apparently didn’t get there on time!
- **Proverbs 13:12 (KJV)** Hope deferred maketh the heart sick: but when the desire cometh, it is a tree of life.

**Proverbs 13:12 (MSG)** Unrelenting disappointment leaves you heartsick, but a sudden good break can turn life around.

**Proverbs 13:12 (TEV)** When hope is crushed, the heart is crushed, but a wish come true fills you with joy.

- Today’s message is for anyone who has ever secretly felt like God broke a promise to you, for anyone who has ever feared that God’s promise in your life has died never to return.
- There are some established principles in God’s Word that we must understand, or we will get very frustrated with God’s promises.

### 1. God’s TIMING is different than mine.

- **John 11:6** When he had heard therefore that he was sick, he abode two days still in the same place where he was.
- God’s clock runs completely different than our clock – He has two kinds of time!
  - **CHRONOS** – regular chronological time; **PLANTING** time
  - **KAIROS** – opportune time of visitation; **REAPING** time
- **Luke 12:56** Ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky and of the earth; but how is it that ye do not discern this **time**?
- **Luke 19:44** Thou knewest not the **time** of thy visitation.

- **Acts 24:25** And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient **season**, I will call for thee.
- **2 Corinthians 6:2** Behold, now is the accepted **time**; behold, now is the day of salvation.
- **Romans 13:11** And that, knowing the **time**, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.
- **Galatians 6:9** And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due **season** we shall reap, if we faint not.
- **ABRAHAM** – when he received his promise, it was still humanly possible to have a child; but it took 25 years of CHRONOS time before his KAIROS time arrived (he was 100 and Sarah was 90!)
- **2 Peter 3:8-9** But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise ...
- **Luke 18:7-8** And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them? I tell you that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?
- Hold on to the promise until God’s time synchronizes with yours!

### 2. God’s PERSPECTIVE is different than mine.

- **John 11:11** Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep.
- Our vantage point is so very limited by our humanity. We can’t see the future, or even all the circumstances of the present!
- God is not frightened or perplexed by our situations. He knows exactly what He is “doing,” and also what He is “allowing.”
- **JOB** – in one day his entire life came crashing down; his livestock, children and property were taken away from him, then his health and the love of his wife were taken away from him; but Job couldn’t see that God was PROVING him, not punishing him

- Just like we enjoy “proving” (showing off!) a car, a new “toy,” or our children’s skills, God enjoys proving us to the devil and the world in the ordinary circumstances of life.
- **Psalm 73:2-3, 16-17** But as for me, my feet were almost gone; my steps had well nigh slipped. For I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked ... When I thought to know this, it was too painful for me; Until I went into the sanctuary of God; then understood I their end.
- **Habakkuk 3:17-19** Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation. The Lord God is my strength, and he will make my feet like hinds' feet, and he will make me to walk upon mine high places.
- **Job 42:10** And the Lord turned the captivity of Job, when he prayed for his friends: also the Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before.
- Hold on to the promise when you can’t see what God is doing! (Your promise looks dead, but it’s really only sleeping!)

### 3. God’s **METHOD** is different than mine.

- **John 11:39** Jesus said, Take ye away the stone.
- **John 11:44** And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with graveclothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go.
- In almost every situation of life, if we had a preference we would do things completely different than God does things. We would make things a whole lot easier – or at least that’s what we think!
- There are some things that God does for us, but there are many things that He wants us to do for ourselves so we can GROW!
- **Illustration:** Butterfly fighting its way out of cocoon
- Sometimes struggles are exactly what we need in our life. If God allowed us to go through our life without any obstacles, it would cripple us. We would not be as strong as what we could have been ... and we could never fly!

- **Isaiah 61:3** To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness – **YOU PUT IT ON!**
- **Matthew 18:9** And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee – **YOU PLUCK IT OUT!**
- **Luke 6:37** Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven – **YOU FORGIVE!**
- **DAVID** – he was anointed to be Israel’s next king by Samuel, but instead of heading to the throne he spent the next several years as a fugitive from Israel’s current king! Several times he had the chance to take matters in his own hands, but he let God fulfill the promise through his own method.
- **1 Samuel 24:10** Behold, this day thine eyes have seen how that the Lord had delivered thee to day into mine hand in the cave: and some bade me kill thee: but mine eye spared thee; and I said, I will not put forth mine hand against my lord; for he is the Lord’s anointed.
- David, you kill the bear, you kill the lion, you kill the giant ... and you exercise self-control (a lot harder to “hold back” than to “step out” sometimes!) when you’re tempted to use your own method instead of God’s! God’s method is often “harder” but it always has better results – it keeps David from becoming another Saul!
- Often when our promises come to us, we still have to make our way through a heavy stone and stinking grave clothes! God sometimes sends us people who are still bound hand, foot and face (they can’t help, they can’t walk, they can’t see!). And then He calls us to unwrap them from their bondage. They are resurrected, but they’re just not LOOSE! **Revival has a price!!**
- **Proverbs 14:4 (KJV)** Where no oxen are, the crib is clean: but much increase is by the strength of the ox.
- **Illustration:** There Is Life Here (sermon by Dennis Munn)

### 4. God’s **FEELING** is the same as mine.

- **John 11:33** When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, he groaned in the spirit, and was troubled,

- **JOSEPH** – he was given a promise that his family would bow before him (sheaves of grain; sun, moon and stars); instead, he spent nearly 15 years in prison, all because others betrayed him! Can you imagine what that FELT like?
- What we can't see is that when God intends to fulfill his promise, he first puts a sentence of death upon that promise and all the ways and means by which it can be fulfilled. It happened with Abraham! It happened with Job! It happened with David! It happened with Joseph! And it happens with us!
- Sometimes the only thing that sustains us in our problems is knowing that God is WITH us, and that HE understands!
- God is too wise to be mistaken  
God is too good to be unkind  
So when you don't understand  
When you don't see His plan  
When you can't trace His hand  
Trust His heart
- **Hebrews 4:15-16** For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.
- **Matthew 28:20** Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.
- Joshua's words to Israel at the end of his life, after they have fought many battles, indicate that even in spite of their losses he knows that God has been faithful through everything ...
- **Joshua 23:14** And ye know in all your hearts and in all your souls, that not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the Lord your God spake concerning you; all are come to pass unto you, and not one thing hath failed thereof.
- **2 Timothy 2:13** If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself.
- **Lamentations 3:21-23** This I recall to my mind, therefore have I hope. It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness.