Martha’s Doubt and Mary’s Faith

Introduction: Ask yourself this morning, Can our actions stop God in his tracks? Can our actions or our doubt stop God from answering prayers? Can it? Can we pray in such a way that gets God to answer prayers faster and without delay?

(John 11:1-6) 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 thouLovest 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. [5] Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus. [6] When he had heard therefore that he was sick, he abode two days still in the same place where he was.

He stayed in the same place! He chilled out! He did not get in a hurry to go see Lazarus!

Jesus had many disciples who followed him and believed the message that he preached, but he had only a few friends! The twelve that he chose were his close friends, with three of them (Peter, James and John) being the closest. He had his challenges too as we learn that one of his twelve friends became a traitor and enemy!

Jesus even had a one Nichodemis who came by night to inquire of the new birth and could be considered a friend or more appropriately a secret disciple.

Joseph of Armitia who gave up his chosen grave plot for the burial of Jesus was another one of these secret disciples! There is another message, “The Secret Disciples”

But in all the history of the story of Jesus Christ we have three reoccurring names. They are Lazarus, Martha and Mary.

These are the same brothers and sisters that invited Jesus into their home often to rest. They lived at Bethany which in not quite two miles from Jerusalem which was convenient for a Jesus to rest at times. This is the same Mary and Martha we read in:

(Luke 10:38-42) Now it came to pass, as they went, that he entered into a certain village: and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house. [39] And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus’ feet, and heard his word. [40] But Martha was cumbered about much serving, and came to him, and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me. [41] And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things: [42] But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.

Martha was the practical one. She was the planner. Martha was the organizer or the orchestrator. Ya’ll know the type, the doer at all the events.

But the greek words for Careful means Anxious About and the work Troubled means Disturbed!
On this particular occasion she is complaining to Jesus that Mary would not help her with the housework! Jesus recognized that Mary was hungry for the spiritual food he was providing! Amen? He called it the **GOOD PART!** Which will **NOT BE TAKEN FROM HER**

Now we are at a point in their lives when a true crisis arises! Lazarus has gotten very sick and they call for Jesus to come. They just know that surely Jesus a friend who has done miracles for complete strangers would come and do a miracle for them, amen?

All they desired was that he would COME! If he would COME he would know what to do!

Summoning their swiftest messenger they sent word to Jesus that Lazarus was sick unto death and would he please hurry and come. But instead of dropping everything and coming to then, he purposely waited two days until Lazarus died. **NOTICE:** He waited two days and traveled two days for when he arrived Lazarus had been dead four days!

So if he had left immediately Lazarus would still have been dead for two days!

Why four days? **Note:** The spirit of the deceased hovering over and around them for three days before leaving. Waiting four days leaves no doubt to anyone that Lazarus is really dead!

Anyway, lets resume our story:

*(John 11:17-19)* Then when Jesus came, he found that he had lain in the grave four days already. [18] Now Bethany was nigh unto Jerusalem, about fifteen furlongs off: [19] And many of the Jews came to Martha and Mary, to comfort them concerning their brother.

The mourners had gathered to comfort Mary and Martha. So there was quite a crowd gathered! When someone came into that stilled and hushed room and whispered to Martha that Jesus was coming down the road she left Mary and went alone to take her pain out on Jesus for not being there when they needed him!

Have you ever blamed God for not being there when you needed him? Can you feel the bite in her voice or notice the pain in which she spoke?

*(John 11:20)* Then Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met him: but Mary sat still in the house. [21] Then said Martha unto Jesus, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.

Jesus if you really cared you would have come and performed this miracle for me! Oh Lord if only you could have been here he would still be alive!

So she is basically slamming him for not being there when she needs him but she follows jup with her statement of faith, amen? Or is it her faith?

*(John 11:22)* But I know, that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee.

Is she saying that even now he could rise her brother from the grave?

*(John 11:23)* Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again. [24] Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day.
Not here, Not now?  We limit God in what we think he is capable of doing!  Hello?  Have you ever said something could happen and then when confronted with that possibility have doubt?  She said with her own words that God would do anything he asks!  Then when Jesus says her brother will rise again, she says yeah I know he will in the last day.

Her doubt is really showing isn't it?  Have you ever messed up like this and get a second chance and still mess up?

**Listen to the next two verses!**

*(John 11:25)* Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: **[26]** And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?

Jesus is asking Martha, do you believe that I am the resurrection and life though a person be dead in me he shall live again.  He is asking her point blank if she believes if he can raise Lazarus from the dead!

**Her answer?**

*(John 11:27)* She saith unto him, Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world.

You do realize that not answering a question is answering a question right?  I believe this about you and I believe that about you but if you are asking me if I believe that you can raise Lazarus from the dead after four days nope.  **She does not have the faith to believe!**  But notice what she does next!  **She went to Mary and told her the Lord wanted to see her!**

*(John 11:28)* And when she had so said, she went her way, and called Mary her sister secretly, saying, The Master is come, and calleth for thee.

Maybe while walking back to see mary she realized her doubt!  Can you relate to times in your walk that after the fact and in many cases only a few minutes afterwards that you see your doubt!  The scripture did not say “Go tell Mary come here.”  Maybe because Martha knew Mary had more faith?

*(John 11:29)* As soon as she heard that, she arose quickly, and came unto him.  **[30]** Now Jesus was not yet come into the town, but was in that place where Martha met him.

**NOTICE:**  Jesus did not move from where Martha first met him!  It is as if her doubt stopped him in his tracks!  He had set out to raise Lazarus from the dead but has been delayed due to doubt!  Notice also that he didn't move any closer to completing this deed until another faithful one came!

*(John 11:31)* The Jews then which were with her in the house, and comforted her, when they saw Mary, that she rose up hastily and went out, followed her, saying, She goeth unto the grave to weep there.  **[32]** Then when Mary was come where Jesus was, and saw him, she fell down at his feet, saying unto him, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.

**NOTICE:**  Her mood and her spirit upon approaching Jesus!  There was no mention of Martha bowing or kneeling or any signs of submission to God as she spoke with Jesus!  But Mary fell down at his feet!  And the word used here means to literally fall at his feet!  Have you experienced a broken spirit and while approaching the altar FALL at the feet of Jesus?  **When Thad was on his death bed!**

You see Mary spoke the same words but with an entirely different spirit, amen?  Enough so that it moved Jesus in the spirit!
(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, [34] And said, Where have ye laid him? They said unto him, Lord, come and see. [35] Jesus wept. [36] Then said the Jews, Behold how he loved him!

Was it his love for Lazarus? Or did Mary move him by her display of emotions? The scripture relates his love for all three of them and his intentions to raise Lazarus from the dead. Yet he wept and cried with Mary! Maybe because she did believe, amen?

He was stopped by Martha’s Doubt!

He was moved by Mary’s Faith!

Ask yourself right now! Will your approach to the Lord stop him from doing the miraculous or will he be moved BY YOUR FAITH?

(John 11:37) And some of them said, Could not this man, which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died? [38] Jesus therefore again groaning in himself cometh to the grave. It was a cave, and a stone lay upon it. [39] Jesus said, Take ye away the stone. Martha, the sister of him that was dead, saith unto him, Lord, by this time he stinketh: for he hath been dead four days.

Here we again get to see Martha’s doubt but now in an open forum! Martha is being practical and sensible about the matter! This time it is met with rebuke from Jesus!

(John 11:40) Jesus saith unto her, Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God? [41] Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid. And Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. [42] And I knew that thou hearest me always: but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me. [43] And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. [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.

Some of us here are at the point of our miracle! Jesus has come to deliver and is ready!

Has our doubt prevented his working a miracle or has our faith and approach provoked him to hastily do the miracle?

I don’t know about you but I want all he has and I want to approach him in the right manner so a miracle in the making will materialize! Amen?