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Scripture

John 11:1-27

¹Now a certain man was ill, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. ²Mary was the one who anointed the Lord with perfume and wiped his feet with her hair; her brother Lazarus was ill. ³So the sisters sent a message to Jesus, "Lord, he whom you love is ill." ⁴But when Jesus heard it, he said, "This illness does not lead to death; rather it is for God's glory, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it." ⁵Accordingly, though Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus, ⁶after having heard that Lazarus was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was. ⁷Then after this he said to the disciples, "Let us go to Judea again." ⁸The disciples said to him, "Rabbi, the Jews were just now trying to stone you, and are you going there again?" ⁹Jesus answered, "Are there not twelve hours of daylight? Those who walk during the day do not stumble, because they see the light of this world. ¹⁰But those who walk at night stumble, because the light is not in them." ¹¹After saying this, he told them, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I am going there to awaken him." ¹²The disciples said to him, "Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will be all right." ¹³Jesus, however, had been speaking about his death, but they thought that he was referring merely to sleep. ¹⁴Then Jesus told them plainly, "Lazarus is dead. ¹⁵For your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him." ¹⁶Thomas, who was called the Twin, said to his fellow-disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with him." ¹⁷When Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days. ¹⁸Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, some two miles away, ¹⁹and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them about their brother. ²⁰When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, while Mary stayed at home. ²¹Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. ²²But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask of him." ²³Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again." ²⁴Martha said to him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day." ²⁵Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, ²⁶and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?" ²⁷She said to him, "Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one coming into the world."

Devotional

Throughout the Gospels we see multiple occasions on which there is a problem that seems to have great urgency according to those who believe in Jesus. They need healing for themselves or someone else. They are frightened by the troubled waters. But Jesus does not share that same sense of urgency—in any of the stories. And in this story he is no different. In desperation because of Lazarus' illness, Mary and Martha send for Jesus. When he finally arrives, they focus on his neglecting to come "in time." They focus on actions, timing, and outcomes, but not in that moment on who Jesus is. Jesus moves the conversation from what he "neglected" to do to who he is—the Christ, the Son of God.

Every year in the church, we feel chaos and urgency in planning Palm Sunday, Ash Wednesday, plays, Good Friday, egg hunts, and Easter programs. This passage serves as a reminder that in this Lenten season, as we look to the resurrection and the many things that "need" to be done, we should not lose our focus on Jesus the Christ, the Resurrected One.

Prayer

Creator, Redeemer, Sustainer, help us in this season as we do the work of the Kingdom. May we always remember the One whom we serve, the One whom this season is all about. Empower our work to point to Christ, the One who was resurrected to free us from all our sins.