

# Where Were You, Lord?

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Date: 04 November 2018

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[ 0 : 00 ] So we're in John chapter 11 and the first 44 verses. Now a man named Lazarus was sick. ! He was from Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. 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.

So the sister sent word to Jesus, Lord, the one you love is sick. When he heard this, Jesus said, this sickness will not end in death.

No, it is for God's own glory so that God's son may be glorified through it. Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus.

Yet when he heard that Lazarus was sick, he stayed where he was two more days. Then he said to his disciples, let us go back to Judea. But Rabbi, they said, a short while ago, the Jews tried to stone you, and yet you're going back there.

[ 1 : 11 ] Jesus answered, are there not twelve hours of daylight? A man who walks by day will not stumble, for he sees by this world's light.

It is when he walks by night that he stumbles, for he has no light. After he had said this, he went on to tell them, Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I'm going there to wake him up.

His disciples replied, Lord, if he sleeps, he will get better. Remember, Jesus had been speaking of his death, but his disciples thought he meant natural sleep. So then he told them plainly, Lazarus is dead.

And for your sakes, I am glad. I'm glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him. Then Thomas, called Didymus, said to the rest of the disciples, Let us also go, that we may die with him.

On his arrival, Jesus found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days. Bethany was less than two miles from Jerusalem, and many Jews had come to Martha and Mary to comfort them in the loss of their brother.

[ 2 : 23 ] When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went out to meet him. But Mary stayed at home. Lord, Martha said to Jesus, If you had been here, my brother would not have died.

But I know that even now God will give you whatever you ask. Jesus said to her, Your brother will rise again. Martha answered, I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day.

Jesus said to her, I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies. And whoever lives and believes in me will never die.

Do you believe this? Yes, Lord, she told him. I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who was to come into the world. And after she had said this, she went back and called her sister Mary aside.

The teacher is here, she said, and is asking for you. When Mary heard this, she got up quickly and went to him. Now Jesus had not yet entered the village, but was still at the place where Martha had met him.

[ 3 : 32 ] When the Jews who had been with Mary in the house, comforting her, noticed how quickly she got up and went out, they followed her, supposing she was going to the tomb to mourn there.

When Mary reached the place where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet and said, Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.

When Jesus saw her weeping and the Jews who had come along with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in spirit and troubled. Where have you laid him?

He asked. Come and see, Lord, they replied. Jesus wept. Then the Jews said, see how he loved him. But some of them said, could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?

Jesus once more deeply moved, came to the tomb. It was a cave with a stone laid across the entrance. Take away the stone, he said. But Lord, said Martha, the sister of the dead man, by this time there's a bad odor, for he has been there four days.

[ 4 : 45 ] Then Jesus said, did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God? So they took away the stone. Then Jesus looked up and said, Father, I thank you that you have heard me.

I 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. When he had said this, Jesus called in a loud voice, Lazarus, come out.

The 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.

We're welcoming again tonight our brother David Wallen from the Grace Emmanuel Reformed Baptist Church in Grand Rapids. Come, brother, preach to us God's word. I want to thank you so much for your warm welcome today and for your wonderful hospitality.

Thanks again for that. Well, this evening, I want to take you to that passage in the Gospel of John, chapter 11. It's not unrelated to what we looked at this morning, not disconnected, but we want to continue to calibrate ourselves to having the right expectations in a fallen world, in a world that is groaning.

[ 6 : 18 ] We need to have a true Christian mindset so that when tragedy hits, it's not unexpected.

But also, we don't just look at a passage like this after a tragedy has hit, but in order to prepare us for that time as well.

So I'd invite you to have your Bibles open at John, chapter 11. Let's pray. Great God of heaven and of earth, our desire this evening is to hear from you.

Lord, would you fulfill your promise of meeting with your people. Lord, would you open our eyes to your truth. Pray this in Jesus' name.

Amen. Amen. So we are looking at the events surrounding the death and resurrection of Lazarus this evening, but we're not looking at the whole passage.

[ 7 : 18 ] But rather, I want to focus in particular on three verses, where on three occasions, we find different people saying or asking essentially the same thing.

If you look with me at the words of Martha, verse 21, says here, Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.

And then secondly, we have the words of her sister Mary, in verse 32, if you glance down there.

Halfway through the verse, Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.

And then thirdly, we have the words of a group of onlookers, these Jews, in verse 37. This is what God's word says.

Could not he, who opened the eyes of the blind man, also have kept this man from dying? Now when you look at those three statements, I think, buried within them, they are all essentially asking the same question of Jesus.

[ 8 : 38 ] Where were you, Lord? Where were you, Lord? And it's a question that regularly is asked when tragedy strikes.

Whatever that tragedy might be, from an international to a national to a local to a family to an individual. Where were you, Lord? It seems like a reasonable question, one that we want an answer to, in order to try and make sense of what has happened.

Why weren't you here? You could have stopped this. It's important to notice right at the start, that they never once doubted his power to heal.

All his power to stop something like this. So clearly, alongside these questions, at least the two sisters had faith.

Look with me at what has just happened. Let's go through the main points relevant to us in John chapter 11. Because here, we are approaching the final days of Jesus Christ.

[ 9 : 47 ] This isn't long now, before Jesus enters Jerusalem on the donkey. followed by all the events of Passion Week, Holy Week, then his death, then his resurrection, and his ascension.

And what we see here, before all that, but not unrelated to it, is a simple truth that Jesus, the Creator, had personal relationships with people on earth.

A circle of friends, family, Martha, Mary, and Lazarus, are three precious friends of the Lord Jesus. They live in Bethany, not far from Jerusalem.

We're dealing here with a real place, a real family, a real tragedy, real suffering, and real questions. And as the chapter begins, Jesus is somewhere else. Verse 1 tells us that Lazarus is sick. And so in verse 3, these two sisters, Martha and Mary, send this messenger with a request to Jesus.

[10:55] And they specifically point to something that to them is clearly evident. The fact that Jesus loved this man, loved him, in verse 5.

He also tells us of the love he has for Martha and Mary in verse 5 there. And it's at this point that you expect Jesus to leave and travel the short distance over to Lazarus to help, maybe to heal. But no. Jesus delayed going for two days, as we're told in verse 6. And to us and to them, it seems strange. Always has.

Why, Lord? Why? Now some commentators tell us that if you do a quick calculation, it seems fairly certain that by the time the messenger found Jesus, that Lazarus could have been dead already. That's not really the point here. When Jesus arrives, he's been buried four days in a cave. Lazarus is absolutely dead.

[12:01] Beyond doubt. In a tomb. People are grieving. And Martha and Mary, put yourself in their shoes. They've had four days to think about this. Seems they're confused.

But Jesus isn't. Think about Martha. She has witnessed her Lord Jesus Christ perform wondrous miracles.

We know what happens at the end of this story. We've just read it. She's living this. And I wonder what those dear ladies had been thinking over those few days.

Where is he? Why didn't he come? Why didn't he help? And in verse 20, we see that as soon as Martha hears that Jesus is finally arriving, she's up, she's out.

She's the first to say what she's been thinking. Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. She told him how she felt. She cried out to God.

[13:06] She was honest. She poured out her heart. Jesus doesn't rebuke her. Maybe you've been in that situation. Maybe you are today.

Where were you, Lord? Why did you allow this to happen? Why didn't you stop it? You were late. But you see, straight after these words come out of Martha's mouth, she then follows them with some words demonstrating faith and hope.

But I know that even now, whatever you will ask of God, he will give it to you. She had faith. She trusted, but so many questions.

So what can we learn? Well, I suggest that three things strike us in this text. Three realities and truths that will help us, if you've ever suffered a tragedy, but also will prepare us for future tragedies. And our first point is this. Tragedy conference. Tragedy conference. This family is shattered, is crushed.

[14:24] A tragedy had happened, even though we know, we've established, that they are loved by God. Those two facts are not mutually exclusive.

If you experience a tragic event, or a hardship, or suffering of any kind, you can never conclude that God does not love you. Or that God has in some way forgotten about you.

Now, tragedy confronts all the time, many different scales, many different levels. And I'm sure some of you have experienced terrible things as individuals, as families, as a nation.

The writer of Ecclesiastes, in chapter 2, verse 22, gives us reality. Talks about all, all his days are sorrows, and his travail grief. Then in Job, we see the same message.

Man that is born of a woman, he's off few days, and full of trouble. We live, in a fallen world. We live in a world, that is crying out. Why is this world full of sin, and trouble, and heartache, and tragedy?

[15:37] God's word tells us, that all of these events, are the results of man's fall. Our sin nature. That poison entered the world, when Adam and Eve sinned on our behalf, all those years ago.

And the world at that moment, was corrupted, tainted. But then in Genesis 3, 15, we see that first glimmer, of what God was, and is doing, to put this right.

We'll see more of that in a moment, but for now, we need to, have our expectations set, and calibrated correctly, so that we don't get confused, when these things happen. We've established already, that this family, is loved by Jesus Christ.

Being loved by God, does not guarantee, an easy life, they experience, affliction here. Charles Spurgeon said, the love of Jesus, does not separate us, from the common necessities, and infirmities, of human life.

Men of God, are still men. The covenant of grace, is not a charter, of exemption, from consumption, rheumatism, or asthma. We might add, legitimately, tragedy, to Spurgeon's list.

[16:52] That's our first point. Tragedy, confronts. It's reality, in this fallen, sinful, world. Secondly, we notice that, God, comforts.

God, comforts. Jesus Christ, here, is genuinely, moved. He cares. He moved, into the ruins, of this, this hard, providence, for this family, and he brings grace.

Jesus, God, is not indifferent. Verse 35, he, he weeps, with those, who weep. He genuinely, loves these people, with whom he has, this special relationship.

And if you are a Christian, you too, have a special relationship, with Christ Jesus. And he wants us, to pour out, our hearts to him, as Martha did. But you see, I can care.

I can be compassionate. Any of us, can. The fundamental difference, here, with Jesus, is that, he can control, all things. This is another, comfort to us, when we reflect, that not for a single, moment, did God, ever lose control.

[18:13] Either back then, or in whatever, circumstances, you have been through, or will go through, in your life. Think about that. Jesus, already knew, about this, entire situation, before the messenger, arrived.

You see, God is sovereign, completely powerful, completely, all knowing. And not for one moment, was he, or is he, out of control. Not for one, second, does he take, his loving gaze, from his children.

The love of God, is not in question. The power of God, is not in question. And that stands true, in tragedy, today, as it did, back with Martha, and Mary.

To them, he was four days late, but the reality is, that he was still on time. To us, it might seem like, he was late, in certain circumstances, in your life.

He wasn't. He is working, on a perfect, divine, timetable. Alexander, McLaren says, God is never in haste.

[19:27] He never comes, too soon, or too late. So God's delay, makes the deliverance, the more signal, and joyous, when it is granted. And though hope deferred, may sometimes, make the heart sick.

The desire, when it comes, is a tree of life. My friends, everything happens, with a divine, punctuality. God is never, before his time, never too late.

He controls time. This was a, deliberate delay. God's plan, has not shifted, one inch. It's an eternal, plan of redemption.

You see, Jesus died on the cross, at Calvary, to make a way, of forgiveness. He conquered death. But right now, the reality is, that we are still, in this sinful, sorrowful, earth, until he comes again.

The result, though, is not in question. Satan is defeated, and right now, as Christians, we have victory, in a complete, but a smaller sense.

[20:29] we're looking forward, though, to the complete, and final, victory, when Christ returns. That final closure, that final, consummation to come, when every individual, will be allocated, their final, destiny, for eternity, heaven or hell.

But the wonderful news, right now, is that God, is still bringing, more and more people, into his kingdom. More and more people, are turning from their sins, to God, seeking repentance.

People are still, being saved, and God's clock, is still ticking, with perfect accuracy, as his perfect will, unfolds. God remains, all powerful, all knowing, and in divine, control, at all times.

He will triumph. It is certain, regardless of our, ups and downs, in this. life. One writer, reflects on the weeping, of Jesus here, and says, through the lens, of his tears, we see him work, with real flesh, and blood, to triumph, over tragedy, with the power, of heaven.

In the microcosm, of the events, surrounding Lazarus's, death and resurrection, we learn, that the love of God, does not wilt, in the face of tragedy, nor does the power, of God, retreat, in the face of death.

[21:53] Listen to this, the contrast. Death is allowed, its moment, so that we can, clearly see proof, of the savior, who conquers death, to save his people, eternally.

See the moment, compared to, eternity here. Oh, we can trust him. He rules, over life, and death. he's putting right, the consequences, of the fall, and our sin.

So we've seen, that tragedy confronts, we've seen, that God comforts, because of what he does, and who he is, and then we see, that faith, carries, faith, carries.

My friends, today, if you're resting, on Christ, you have, hope, hope, for eternity, and George Muller, once said, faith does not operate, in the realm, of the possible, faith begins, where man's power, ends, and sometimes, when we're in those, difficult providences, it might seem like, we're powerless, and that's why, we look to God, seated continually, on his throne.

George MacDonald, from the 19th century, said this, how often, we look upon God, as our last, and feeblest resource, we go to him, because we have, nowhere else to go, and then we learn, that the storms of life, have driven us, not upon the rocks, but into the desired, heaven, our faith, must be in him, and it's events, like these tragedies, that should strengthen, rather than, shake our faith, and we can find, encouragement here, one writer, points us to God's promises, he says, situations may not, always seem pleasant, while we are in them, but the promise, of God is clear, if we love him, and live our lives, according to his precepts, even that, which seems to be, bleak and hopeless, will be turned, by God, for his glory, and our benefit, and then you can hear, him shouting, hold on, God is, faithful, we don't need to be afraid, if we understand, this big picture, this overarching, plan of God,

[ 24 : 13 ] David in Psalm 27, one says, the Lord is my light, and my salvation, whom shall I fear, the Lord is the strength, of my life, of whom shall I be afraid, we can trust him, we can have faith in him, which carries us through, faith carries, you know Hebrews 13, 5, I will never leave you, or forsake you, have a look, in our passage, at verse 15, what's the end result, of this situation, among the disciples, who witnessed this, the result, is increased faith, increased trust, in him, so that you may believe, look at verse 27, Martha believes, as a result of this, look at verse 42, where the people around, believe as a result, verse 45, many others believe too, God sees, the hard times, we go through,

Jesus is our, only hope, hope, we can trust him, he has the power, over life and death, Psalm 46, he is our refuge, and strength, our very present, help in trouble, Psalm 62, 8, urges us, to trust in him, at all times, you people, pour out your heart, before him, God is a refuge, for us, we need to be, in that right place, in God's hands, completely, my friends, tragedies confront us, but we can be assured, at all times, of God's care, and control, and we can indeed, be strengthened, we can believe more, as a result of these, things, but I just want to consider, a few more applications, and Bible truths, which I trust will help us, before we, we finish, think about your future, if you're a Christian, the pain we suffer here, continually reminds us, that this isn't, this isn't our home, the apostle Paul, in 2nd Corinthians 4, 17, puts it all, in perspective for us, listen for that, contrast again, for our light affliction, which is but for a moment, works for us, a far more exceeding, an eternal, weight of glory, moment, compared to eternity, look at how Jesus, uses this, this opportunity, in John chapter 11, to teach Martha, about himself, in verse 25,

I am the resurrection, and the life, he that believes in me, though he were dead, yet he shall he live, and whoever lives, and believes in me, shall never die, and it seems she believes, that Jesus will bring life, at what we call, the general resurrection, the last day, that's when she expects, to see Lazarus, to be raised, but Jesus shows, in the raising of Lazarus, right then, that he has come, to bring eternal life, now to those, who believe in him, he came, not just to conquer death, though, for one person, or a few people, Jesus came to die, and be raised again, to defeat it completely, eternally, for his children, and in verse 38, Jesus stands, before the tomb of Lazarus, and it says, he groaned, it could be translated, bellowing with anger, he came to the tomb, he raged, against death, itself, and in just a few, short days from now, he would destroy, it completely, and bring hope, to countless people, who will trust in him, what a savior, we have, what a hope, we have, and when we experience, trouble, and tragedies, it warns us, it reminds us, about eternal matters, we think about, our own mortality, we certainly don't agree, with everything,

C.S. Lewis said, but he said, God whispers to us, in our pleasures, speaks in our conscience, but shouts, in our pains, it is his megaphone, to rouse, a deaf world, God uses, tragedies such, as these, to make people listen, to make people take notice, so I encourage you, if you've never come to him, you need to, humble yourself, sit up, take notice, when these things, happen, turn from your wicked ways, we have a forgiving God here, but until Christ, comes again, we need to be mindful, that there will be, more tragedies, on all those different levels, that will happen, but we can see, in one sense, that God, has destroyed evil, and in another sense, God, will destroy evil, we have a God, who is so committed, to ending suffering, and death, that he was willing, to come into this world, and share in that suffering, and death himself, he brought hope, with him, revelation 21, for we read, of our, glorious future, talking about,

God wiping away, our tears, no more death, no more sorrow, no more crying, no more pain, the former things, have gone, apostle Paul, gives us the right perspective, in Romans, 8, 18, he reasons with us, says, I reckon, the sufferings, of this present time, are not worthy, to be compared, with the glory, which shall be revealed, in us, we're in a fallen world, author, Brian Chappell says, I know, that this is a fallen world, that groans, as in the pains, of childbirth, until Christ returns, to renew all things, I know, that the final chapter, of these events, and all of the tragedies, is not yet written, as God works, all things together, for good, I know, that in the final day, he who knows, the end from the beginning, will judge evil, and vindicate his justice, I know, that when the world shakes, a frivolous, and unrepentant society, may fall to its knees, in search of firmer foundations, than this world can offer, that's one, use of these tragedies, for the unbeliever, but experiences like this, are also an aid, to the spiritual growth, of a Christian, they can have a refining, a purifying effect, as Job describes, chapter 23, verse 10, he knows the way, that I take, when he has tried me, [ 31 : 10 ] I shall come forth, as gold, are you in sorrow, learn this lesson, sorrow is one of the best, opportunities in life, to learn more, of Jesus Christ, indeed it's for, for this reason, he permits it, let him use it, send for him, as the sisters did, run to him, learn from him, allow him, to use this opportunity, to teach you, Jesus didn't suffer, for us, so that we would not, suffer, he suffered, so that when we suffer, we become, more like him, this can be, a powerful opportunity, for growth, for becoming more, Christ like, don't waste it, what about the reason, what about the purpose, of this whole thing, you see as we, began we saw Martha, and Mary, and this, this crowd, bringing up that, that vital question, but it's one, we actually have an answer to, right here in our text, have a look at verse four, it tells us, very clearly, it is, for the glory, of God, so that the son of God, may be glorified, through it, that's the, ultimate answer, to the why question,

God's glory, that's the purpose, that's the reason, for the delay, Jesus knows the outcome, we see that here, Jesus saw the end, Jesus knew that Lazarus, was going to be raised, he sees the end, from the beginning, not just in, in micro circumstances, like this, but in the macro plan, of the entire universe, but not only does he, he know what's going to happen, he also knows, why, that should be our purpose, too, in each of our lives, on, on the small scale, you know your catechism, you know question one, man's chief end, is to glorify God, that's our ultimate purpose, pastor John MacArthur says, the most important theme, in the universe, is the glory of God, it is the underlying reason, for all of God's works, from the creation of the world, to the redemption, of fallen sinners, to the judgment, of unbelievers, to the manifestation, of his greatness, for all eternity, in heaven, Psalm 46, 10, be still, and know that, I am God, I will be exalted, among the heathen, I will be exalted, in the earth, he will be exalted, he will be glorified, and Matthew Henry, the commentator, agrees with this, he explains to us, that the afflictions, of the saints, are for the glory of God, that he might have opportunity, of showing the favor, for the sweetest mercies, and the most affecting, are those which are occasioned, by trouble, let this reconcile us, to the darkest dispensations, of providence, they are all, for the glory of God, this sickness, this loss, or this disappointment, is so, and, if God be glorified, we ought to be satisfied, satisfied, but you see, the result of, the raising of Lazarus, was Jesus' own death, the religious leaders, in verse 45 onwards, are now, absolutely determined, to remove Jesus, and Lazarus, from the picture, and the resurrection, of Lazarus, as John MacArthur says, evidenced Christ's glory, in three ways, it pointed unmistakably, to his deity, it strengthened, the faith of the disciples, and others as we saw, and it led, directly, to the cross, and we see, hints of that, in further on, in the chapter, in particular, in verse 53, Jesus then, has, a larger, purpose, in mind, all for God's glory, let me, let me round up, our thoughts, this evening, with apologies, to my wife Sarah, I use her, as an illustration, she, likes these, hallmark movies, I don't know, if you've ever seen them, they're movies, where the plot, is so predictable, and they all, have, a happy ending, and you can see, them coming, a mile away, real life, isn't like that, look at the scripture, if it was, God's will, he could have, stopped, Daniel being thrown, into the lion's den, if it was, God's will, he could have, kept, Paul and Silas, and Peter, and others, out of jail, if it was, God's will, he could have, stopped Stephen, being stoned, if it was, God's will, he could have, kept Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, out of the fiery furnace, but the truth is, that God has never promised, to keep us, out of hard places, what he has promised, is to go with us, through every hard place, and to bring us through, victoriously, if you're his, are you? [ 36 : 43 ] As Christians, we're not guaranteed, a pain free life, we're presented, with that realism, that we saw this evening, and this morning, that must be, your expectation, rather, we look, ahead, to the hope, of heaven, when you belong to him, then you have, all that you will ever need, in life,

death, time, and eternity, we still experience, suffering, and death, and Jesus weeps, with us too, but we have the promise, that those who die, in Christ, will live, we'll be reunited, and we don't need, to be afraid, of death, our days are, are numbered, on this earth, and when our, time comes to die, we will go to Christ, to the place, prepared for us, we'll be part of, and share, in his complete victory, over death, and the grave, and we need to see, the big picture,

Martha couldn't see it, she didn't know yet, the disciples, and others, didn't yet understand, that Jesus was, and is, on an all-encompassing, rescue mission, to not help, temporarily, like he did with Lazarus, but eternally, Lazarus, is a foreshadowing, he's a kind of parable, of what will happen, to every believer, one day, all because of, our saviour's, death, own death, and resurrection, never to die again, you need, an anchored faith, in that truth, because here we have, hope for tomorrow, and strength, for today, if you are going through, difficult times, and they're genuinely difficult, we never minimize that, you need to minister, to each other, you need to grieve, you need to help, but you must bring hope, true hope, we don't have the insight, and power of Jesus Christ, but we can point people, to him, the only one, who can help, what we should do, at difficult times, is not turn away, from church, or the Bible, or the means of grace, you turn to them, you turn to Christ, that should be, your natural reaction, that's where the hope is, read your Bible, pray more, look to God, question him, like Martha did, look to his promises, look at his unchanging character, look at his faithfulness, to others, understand all of this, from the saviour's perspective, that big picture, look to Christ, events, events like these, help us to love Christ, maybe you know, the hymn by Elizabeth Prentice, where she expresses, it well, in more love to thee, let sorrow do its work, send grief and pain,

I always think, can I really sing that, sweet are thy messengers, sweet their refrain, when they can sing with me, more love, oh Christ to thee, more love to thee, more love to thee, oh I encourage you, to look to Christ, trust him, rely on him completely, stand firm, we know how this ends, we're told, we know that Jesus, is the Christians, best friend, in the time of need, we know that we have got, nowhere else to go, and no better place to go, and some bright morning, we will awake on heaven's shore, when everything broken by sin, will be fixed, maybe it looks like, he's delayed now, but never be in any doubt, all evil will be destroyed, we need to trust, in his timing, in his wisdom, oh it's valid, to shed tears, even though we know, God has everything in hand, for our good, but you need to rest, on the immovable rock, the unchangeable truth, one writer says, without the cross, I do not have much, to say to my world, and my neighbor, about the providence of God, with the cross, I can face, the worst horrors, of this world, and without pretending, to possess, full understanding, or attempting, to offer, a fully acceptable explanation, still contend, that my God cares, do you have, that eternal hope, maybe you don't, maybe you can't, make sense out of, situations, tragedies, on all those levels, when they happen to you, the truth is you won't, without a Christian world view, without a renewed heart, without an understanding, of God's master plan, as presented in scripture, and the question for you, is found in verse 23, in John chapter 11, do you believe this?

Do you believe, personally? Do you believe, in the one true way, to life as Jesus, described, and maybe a storm, is raging in your heart today, Martha was heartbroken, but she learned, that the greatest, consolation possible, is found in Christ, he cares, he is, compassionate, and, and like Martha, we need to believe, in him, good, does, come out, of tragedies, but if you're not, a Christian, this evening, then there's, potentially, an even greater, tragedy, ahead for you, a tragic, encounter, with, an eternity, without God, will you come to him, this evening, on his terms, Jesus, Jesus today, still brings, radical change, and if you come to him, recognizing, your sin, your inability, to save, yourself, you come to him, repentant, looking only, to the cross, where he paid the price, he did everything, necessary, he paid the sin, the penalty, of the sin, of his people, look to the resurrection, as he describes, in verse, 25, he gives life, to those, who believe, in him, that's, that's your only hope, that's the only place, to find, forgiveness, and then, live a life, of thankfulness, and obedience, may you, experience, that death to life, moment, this evening, and then, your hope, like many others, of us here, will be in the one, who said, in John 16, 1333, in the world, you will, have tribulation, but be of good cheer,

[ 43 : 39 ] I have overcome, the world, let's pray together, our Lord God, and heavenly Father, how we thank you, for the hope, of the gospel, how we thank you, for the rock solid truth, that is presented to us, in this precious book, that you have preserved, Lord, we pray, that you would help, those, who have gone through tragedy, those who will face tragedy, in the future, Lord, help them

not to, lean on their own understanding, but to rest completely, on you, and on your truth, and Lord, we pray, for any, who do not know you, this evening, Lord, would you save them, would you help them, to put their faith, in you, for the very first time, be glorified, we pray, through all that happens, in our lives, and help us, Lord, as we persevere, with that certain hope, of heaven ahead, be with us, we pray, in Jesus name,

Amen.