

A Heavenly Perspective

“These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.” – John 16:33

When Mary and Martha found out about how ill their brother, Lazarus was, they sent word to Jesus and simply said, “Lord, behold, he whom You love is sick” (John 11:3). In other words, “Lord, remember us – Mary, Martha, and Lazarus here in Bethany? We’re Your friends. You hang out at our home whenever You’re in town. Remember Martha? She’s the one who makes those killer meals. Mary is the one who sits at Your feet. And Lazarus? He’s Your friend. Lord. Your friend is sick.” They probably thought Jesus would just speak the word, and Lazarus would be healed instantaneously. Or perhaps He would rush back and lay His hand on Lazarus’ fevered head.

Instead we read that Jesus delayed His arrival. In fact, when Jesus heard about Lazarus, He said, “This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified through it” (v.4). Although Jesus loved Mary, Martha, and Lazarus, He stayed where He was for the next two days.

You know the rest of the story. Jesus allowed Lazarus to die, but then He raised him from the dead. The point was that God wanted to bring greater glory to His name.

It is true that God loves us and works all things together for good. But the problem arises with our definition of how God should show that love and what we feel “good” ought to be in our lives. We think that good means no pain, no suffering, no hardship – that it means a problem-free life.

Our definition of good is what benefits us in the here and now, not in the by and by. We are interested in what will benefit us temporarily, but God is interested in what will benefit us eternally.

Donald