

Love, Death and God's Glory

JOHN 11: 1-19

When something bad happens, we naturally ask ...

- “Why did God let this happen?”
- “What have I done wrong?”
- “Is God not pleased with me?”

These questions assume that ...

- if God really loved me, if everything was “all right” between us, only good things would happen to me

- a loving heavenly Father wants me to be healthy, happy, wealthy, and problem free

Are the assumptions (behind these questions) correct?

- “Why did God let this happen?”
- “What have I done wrong?”
- “Is God not pleased with me?”

Assumptions:

- If God really loved me, if everything was “all right” between us, only good things would happen to me
- A loving heavenly Father wants me to be healthy, happy, wealthy, and problem free

Gospel of John

- Most selective, topical and theological gospel
- Eyewitness' account
- Written many years after the events occurred
- Written under the inspiration of God the Holy Spirit

7 Signs point to who Jesus really is - the Son of God

³⁰ Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. ³¹ But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name. (John 20: 30-31)

Gospel of John - 7 Signs

- Changing water into wine at wedding in Cana (Jn 2:1-11)
- Healing royal official's son (Jn 4:46-54)
- Healing paralyzed man at pool of Bethesda in Jerusalem (Jn 5:1-15)
- Feeding the 5,000 (Jn 6:1-15)
- Walking on water (Jn 6:16-21)
- Healing the man born blind (Jn 9:1-41)
- **Raising Lazarus from the dead (Jn 11:1-46)**

Story (in John 11) took place between ...

- **Hanukkah** (Feast of Dedication) and
 - Then came the Festival of Dedication^{[b]that is, Hanukkah} at Jerusalem. It was winter, and Jesus was in the temple courts ... (John 10: 22-23)
 - December 10 – 18, 2020
- **Passover** (Jesus' last Passover in Jerusalem)
 - Six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus lived, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. Here a dinner was given in Jesus' honor. (John 12: 1-2)
 - March 27 – April 3, 2021

Increasing opposition between Jesus & the religious leaders

[Jesus said]: I and the Father are one.”

³¹ Again his Jewish opponents picked up stones to stone him, ... ³³ “We are not stoning you for any good work,” they replied, “but for blasphemy, because you, a mere man, claim to be God.” (John 10: 31, 33)

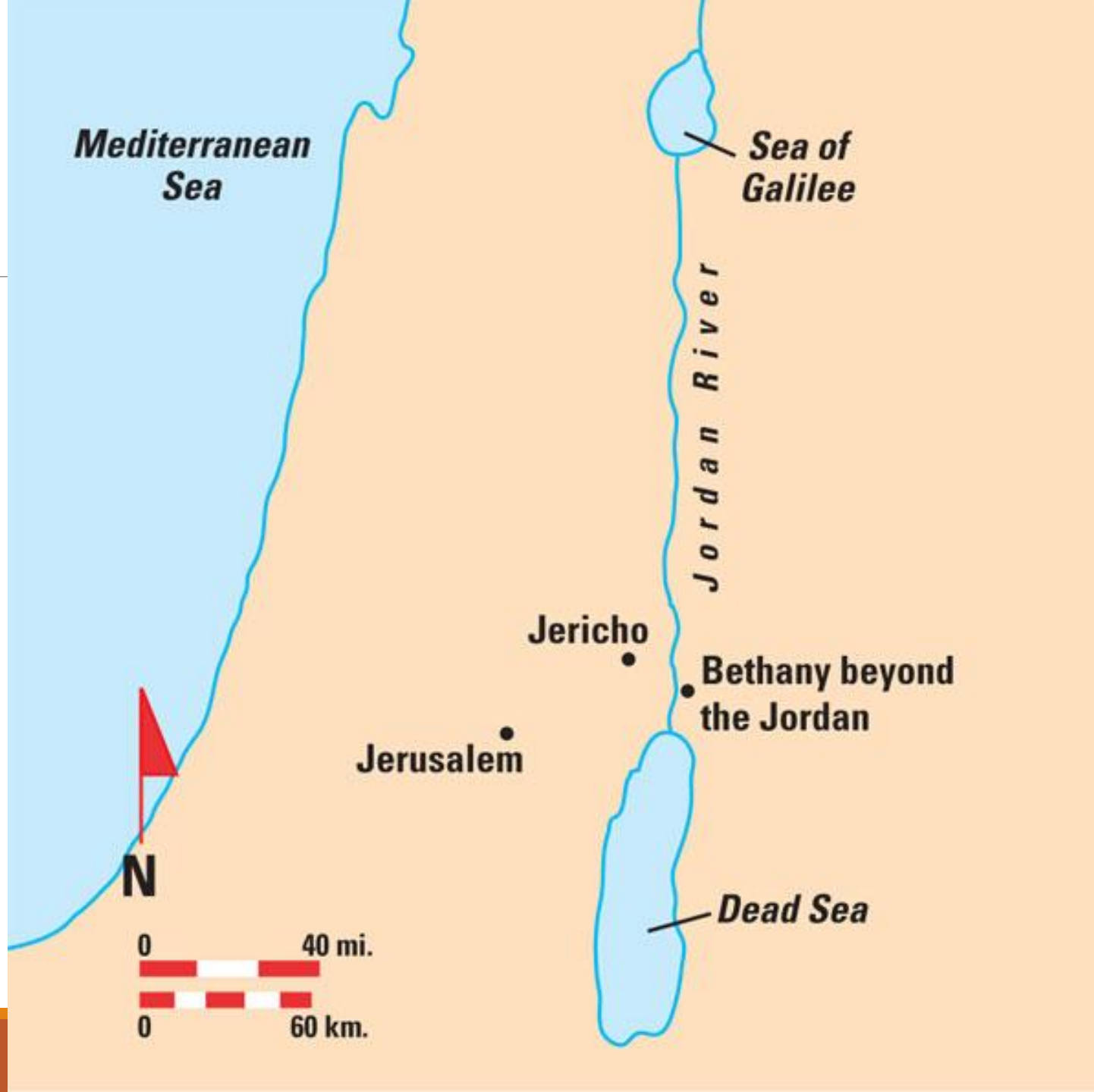
Increasing opposition

Again they tried to seize [Jesus], but he escaped their grasp.
(John 10: 39)

Then Jesus went back across the Jordan to the place where John had been baptizing in the early days. There he stayed, and many people came to him. ... And in that place many believed in Jesus. (John 10: 40-42)

Where had John been baptizing people?

This all happened at Bethany on the other side of the Jordan, where John was baptizing. (John 1: 23)



Let's set the stage for our story

Bethany in Judea

Martha and Mary (Lazarus)

Bethany across the Jordan

Jesus and Disciples

Scene 1: Look for “love”

Now a man named Lazarus was sick. He was from Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. ² (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.) ³ So the sisters sent word to Jesus, “Lord, the one you love is sick.”
(John 11: 1-3)

Bethany in Judea

Martha and Mary (Lazarus)

- very good friends of Jesus
- Lazarus got sick, very sick
- they sent word to Jesus

Bethany across the Jordan

Jesus and Disciples



One way distance: at least 20 miles; 1 day's travel

Bethany in Perea

Jordan
River

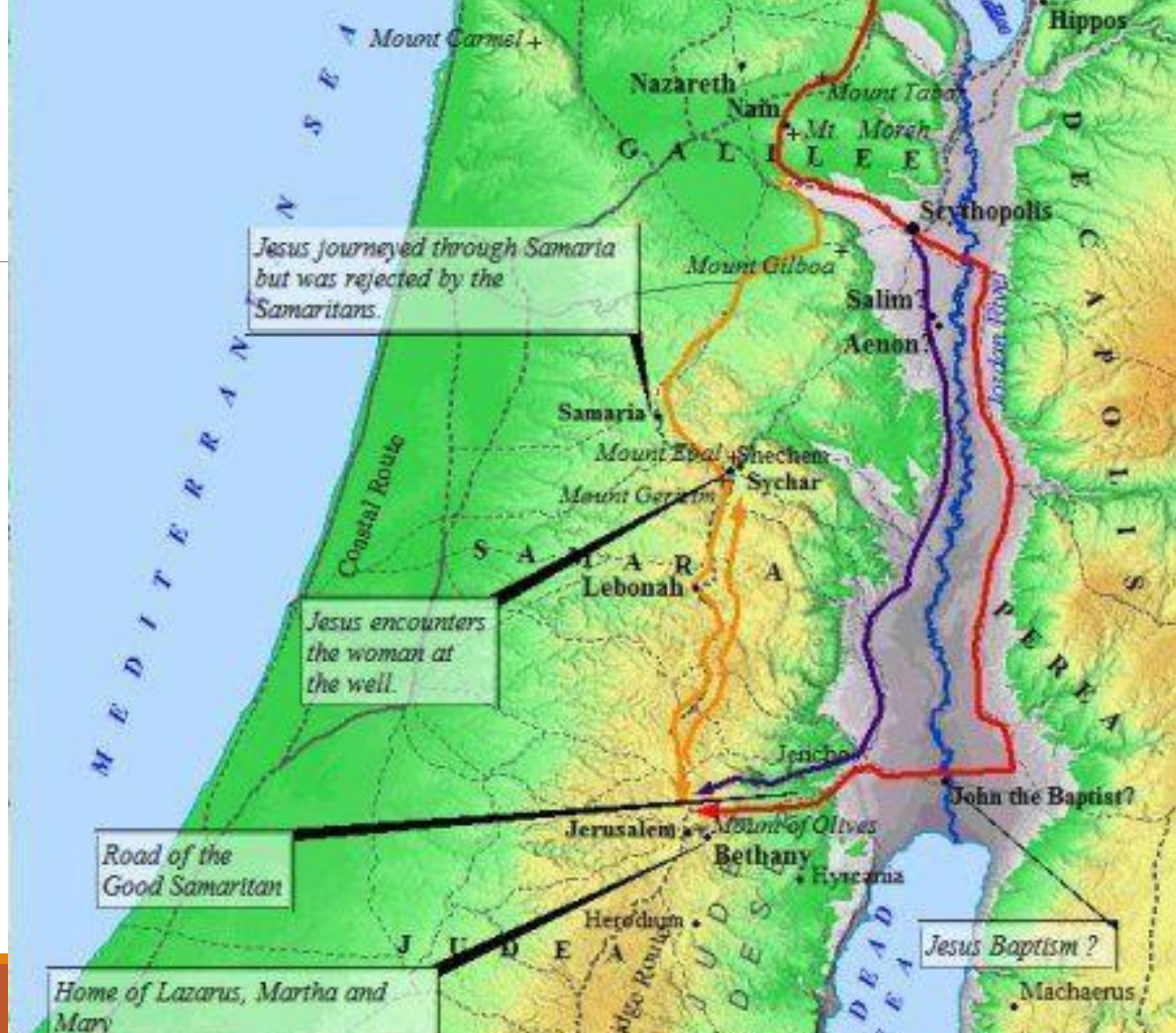
Bethany in Judea

20 miles @ relaxed pace:

6 hrs 40 mins

20 miles @ normal pace:

5 hrs



Jesus journeyed through Samaria but was rejected by the Samaritans.

Jesus encounters the woman at the well.

Road of the Good Samaritan

Home of Lazarus, Martha and Mary

Jesus Baptism ?

Scene 2: Look for love, death & God's glory

⁴ When he heard this, Jesus said, “This sickness will not end in death. No, it is for God’s glory so that God’s Son may be glorified through it.”

⁵ Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus.

⁶ So when he heard that Lazarus was sick, he stayed where he was two more days, ... (John 11: 4-6)

Is this love?

Martha & Mary: *Lord, the one you love is sick.*

Jesus: *This sickness will not end in death. No, it is for God's glory so that God's Son may be glorified through it.*

⁵ Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus.

⁶ So when he heard that Lazarus was sick, he stayed where he was two more days, ... (John 11: 5-6)

Why wait 2 more days?

What was Jesus doing during those 2 days ?

- we won't know with certainty
- best informed guess: praying to His Father

Bethany in Judea

Martha and Mary (Lazarus)

- Lazarus got sick, very sick
- they sent word to Jesus

Bethany across the Jordan

Jesus and Disciples

- “This sickness will not end in death. No, it is for God’s glory so that God’s Son may be glorified through it.”
- Jesus stayed where he was two more days
- then he said to his disciples, “Let us go back to Judea.”

Scene 3: 2 days later ...

... he said to his disciples, “Let us go back to Judea.”
⁸ “But Rabbi,” they said, “a short while ago the Jews there tried to stone you, and yet you are going back?”

⁹ Jesus answered, “Are there not twelve hours of daylight? Anyone who walks in the daytime will not stumble, for they see by this world’s light. ¹⁰ It is when a person walks at night that they stumble, for they have no light.”

(John 11: 7-10)

Scene 3: Jesus & his disciples

- Disciples were arguing with Jesus
- “Rabbi, don’t do that! That’s not a good idea.”
- God’s delays and ways can be totally confusing to us

Habakkuk's argument with God

- “How long, LORD, must I call for help, but you do not listen? ...Why do you make me look at injustice? Why do you tolerate wrongdoing?” (Habakkuk 1: 2-3)
- God finally answered Habakkuk's plea: I will use the Babylonians as my instrument of judgment on Judah
- Horrified, Habakkuk exclaimed: “O LORD, not them! Don't do that!” (see Habakkuk 1: 12-17)

Back to Scene 3: Jesus & his disciples

- Jesus replied, “There are twelve hours of daylight every day. During the day people can walk safely. They can see because they have the light of this world. But at night there is danger of stumbling because they have no light.”
(John 11: 9-10; NLT)
- Our lifespan, like a 12-hr day, is predetermined and fixed by God (see Psalm 139: 16; Matthew 6: 27)
- It’s safest to walk in the daylight of God’s will because we won’t stumble

Jesus & his Father's will

- “It is my Father’s will that I go to Jerusalem. Therefore, I will be “safer” there than I would be here, outside His will.”
- Jesus’ disciples were correct. Returning to Jerusalem could mean the death of Jesus.
- “Safer” means Jesus will be fulfilling His Father’s mission

Why 2-day delay ?

- Jesus was still praying and seeking His Father's will
- Waiting for His Father's "green light" to return to Judea
- Jesus: perfect Son of God – fully human and fully divine

Bethany in Judea

Martha and Mary (Lazarus)

- Lazarus got sick, very sick
- they sent word to Jesus

[SCENE 1]

Bethany across the Jordan

Jesus and Disciples

- “This sickness will not end in death. No, it is for God’s glory ...”
- Jesus stayed where he was two more days

[SCENE 2]

- Jesus said to his disciples, “Let us go back to Judea.”
- “Rabbi, a short while ago the Jews there tried to stone you, and yet you are going back?”

[SCENE 3]

Scene 3 - continued

¹¹ After he had said this, he went on to tell them, “Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep; but I am going there to wake him up.” ¹² His disciples replied, “Lord, if he sleeps, he will get better.” ¹³ Jesus had been speaking of his death, but his disciples thought he meant natural sleep.

¹⁴ So then he told them plainly, “Lazarus is dead, ¹⁵ and for your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him.”

¹⁶ Then Thomas (also known as Didymus) said to the rest of the disciples, “Let us also go, that we may die with him.”

(John 11: 11-16)

Bethany in Judea

- Lazarus got sick, very sick
- Martha & Mary sent word to Jesus

[Day 1]

[Day 2]

[Day 3]

Bethany across the Jordan

- “This sickness will not end in death. No, it is for God’s glory so that God’s Son may be glorified through it.”
- Jesus stayed where he was two more days

- Jesus said to his disciples, “Let us go back to Judea.”
- “Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep; but I am going there to wake him up.”
- “Lazarus is dead, and for your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him.”

Next scene ...

¹⁷ On his arrival, Jesus found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days. ¹⁸ Now Bethany was less than two miles from Jerusalem, ¹⁹ and many Jews had come to Martha and Mary to comfort them in the loss of their brother. (John 11: 17-19)

Bethany in Judea

- Lazarus got sick, very sick
- Martha & Mary sent word to Jesus

- Jesus and disciples arrived
 - Lazarus had been in the tomb for 4 days
- [SCENE 4]

Bethany across the Jordan

- “This sickness will not end in death. No, it is for God’s glory so that God’s Son may be glorified through it.”
- Jesus stayed where he was two more days

- Jesus said to his disciples, “Let us go back to Judea.”
- “Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep; but I am going there to wake him up.”
- “Lazarus is dead, ... let us go to him.”

[Day 4]

Day #	Bethany in Judea	Bethany across the Jordan
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Lazarus got sick, very sick ○ Martha & Mary sent word to Jesus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ “This sickness will not end in death. No, it is for God’s glory so that God’s Son may be glorified through it.” ○ Jesus stayed where he was two more days
2		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Day #1 after hearing the news
3		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Day #2 after hearing the news ○ Jesus said to his disciples, “Let us go back to Judea.” ○ “Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep; but I am going there to wake him up.” ○ “Lazarus is dead, ... let us go to him.”
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Jesus and disciples arrived ○ Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days 	

When did Lazarus die?

- he was alive when the messenger left Martha and Mary
- he died most likely before the messenger reached Jesus and his disciples

Day #	Bethany in Judea	Bethany across the Jordan
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Lazarus got sick, very sick○ Martha & Mary sent word to Jesus	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ “This sickness will not end in death. No, it is for God’s glory so that God’s Son may be glorified through it.”○ Jesus stayed where he was two more days
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4	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Jesus and disciples arrived○ Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days	

Had Jesus immediately rushed back to Bethany ...

- last stretch of 20-mile trip would be at night (with dangers)
- at best, would have arrived in time for Lazarus' burial

So he told them plainly, “Lazarus is dead. And for your sakes, I’m glad I wasn’t there, for now you will really believe. Come, let’s go see him.” (John 11: 14-15; NLT)

I'm glad I wasn't there; now you will really believe

- the glory of God revealed through Lazarus' resurrection?

But some said, "This man healed a blind man. Couldn't he have kept Lazarus from dying?" (John 11: 37; NLT)

Many of the people who were with Mary believed in Jesus when they saw this [Lazarus' resurrection] happen. (v. 45; NLT)

But some went to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done. Then the leading priests and Pharisees called the high council together. (vv. 46-47; NLT)

Delay led to ...

- the glory of God revealed through Lazarus' resurrection
- many who witnessed it believed in Jesus
- the faith of many were deepened and strengthened
- also the “trigger” to Jesus' crucifixion (and resurrection)
- the glory of God revealed through the cross and Jesus' own resurrection !

Jesus loved Martha, Mary and Lazarus; Therefore, he delayed returning to Bethany

- “Do you trust me? Do you trust that I know what’s best?”
- This kind of trust can’t be learned in comfort and ease
- Can’t be learned quickly or immediately – requires time, patience, and perseverance
- It requires suffering
- ... the pressure of desperation – that we are totally helpless and hopeless without Him

Scene 3: Disciples misunderstand Jesus

Then he said, “Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but now I will go and wake him up.” (v. 11; NLT)

The disciples said, “Lord, if he is sleeping, he will soon get better!” They thought Jesus meant Lazarus was simply sleeping, but Jesus meant Lazarus had died. (vv. 12-13; NLT)

- Do we misunderstand what Jesus says to us?

Let's take the time to listen carefully to God

- a short time later, Jesus' disciples forgot their argument/conversation with Jesus in Scene 3
- Jesus did go to Jerusalem
- Jesus was crucified
- Disciples thought it was a tragic mistake
- They grieved and hid themselves for 3 days because they couldn't understand why God would do that!