

# The Old-Time Evangelistic News

Evangelist W. Paul Redmond Sr.

Volume 4, Issue 9

February 2008

## Do Not Give Up! God Knows what He is Doing! (Part 2) (John 11:1-44)

In considering this great thought of the Lord's absolute control in our lives, we first looked at The Problems of the Saints. Mary, Martha, and Lazarus were in distress because of his suffering, and also because of the delay of the Savior. We must keep reminding ourselves that God does not work based on our clock or our calendar. We must trust in Him to work according to His own time. It may seem to be late, but only because we are looking at our schedule, not His. He is never late, nor is He early. He is always on time. We also must remind ourselves that God has a bigger purpose in mind than what we know of at the time. We pray and want our request answered many times for selfish reasons, neglecting to seek God's will for the moment. Even if we pray completely surrendered to what God wants, we still cannot see into the future. That is where faith comes into praying. We do not know what is going to happen. But we believe that God will do what is best, and thus we surrender completely to His will. When the difficulties come, we must remind ourselves over and over again—do not give up! God knows what He is doing!

That brings us to the second aspect of this message—**The Purposes for the Situation**. It is in our nature to ask why. People always want to know, “Why did this happen?” As we read through the Bible, our children often ask, “Why did God do it this way,” or, “Why didn't God do this?” I reply, “I cannot tell you why God did something. I can tell you what happened, when it happened, and how it happened, but I cannot tell you why it happened. God's ways are beyond our comprehension. Romans 11:33 says, ‘His ways [are] past finding out.’” It seems to satisfy them for the moment—at least until the next situation arises. But adults are just as bad. They are always asking why, but most of the time God does not tell us why He does something

-2-

the way He does it. In most situations, I believe God does not tell us why, so that we will trust in Him more.

Although God does not always tell us specifically why He does something, in this passage we do find two general reasons for God working the way He does. The first purpose is so there will be Rejoicing in the Sovereign. Upon hearing of Lazarus' sickness, Jesus says, “This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby” (John 11:4). This statement is made in particular for Lazarus and Mary and Martha, but by application, it is true for every situation for every believer. This reason—for God's glory—may sound trite and undesirable to hear, but it is the absolute truth. We hear it said, and pay nominal allegiance to it, but when it comes to our own situations, we want a better answer. I know because I have been there myself. When Tamatha miscarried during her first two pregnancies, it was very difficult to deal with. We had the joy of expectant parenthood, but then a few weeks later, she lost the baby and our hopes were crushed. Humanly speaking, we wanted to know, “Why did God not allow the baby to live?” God did not give us a specific reason. All we could rely on was that God knew what was best, and He was being and would be glorified in what was taking place. I doubt that I handled the trial at the time like I should have, but as I look back several years later, I can see that those were the beginning of testing times for Tamatha and me. I now can say, not just in theory, but in reality, that God never makes a mistake, and He always knows what is best. That is one purpose for trials— that God may be glorified.

The word glory in verse 4 means “splendor, brightness, magnificence, excellence, preeminence, dignity, and grace.” God wants us to glorify Him, and often He brings trials into our lives, so we will bring glory to Him. I Corinthians 10:31 says, “Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.” We have heard it, and we know it, but do we practice it? Do we allow God to work in our lives, so He can be glorified? Or, do we complain and murmur and question whether God knows what He is doing? That is tough preaching and even tougher living, but it is the

absolute truth. If we complain, we are doubting God, and He is not being glorified. In every situation, in every trial, we must completely believe that God is doing what is best. Then, God is glorified.

That word glory carries with it some great meanings. God works in our lives, so we can see His splendor. God works in us, so we can see His brightness, magnificence, and excellence. Do you see how excellent God is when He works in your life? Jesus said that the sickness came so that God the Father and God the Son would be preeminent. Have we come to the place in our lives where it does not matter what happens to us as long as God has first place? Is He preeminent in our lives? He wants to be, and often trials are placed in our lives, so we will give Him the preeminence. May God enable us to give Him the glory that is due unto His name, even in the midst of great trials and hardships.

Another purpose for the situation is that there might be a Reliance of the Saints. Jesus said in John 11:15, “And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, to the intent ye may believe.” Jesus tarried two extra days where he was, and allowed Lazarus to die, so that the faith of the disciples would increase. Jesus wanted the disciples to learn to rely (believe) on Him more. It is interesting that even though they had been with Jesus for almost three years now, their faith was not what it should have been. They had seen many miracles—two other dead people raised, countless lepers cleansed, many sick healed—but their faith needed to be increased. That is why God sends testings our way—to increase our faith. We may think that we have enough faith, but do we have enough to move mountains? Jesus said in Matthew 17:20, “If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you.” We talk about living by faith, but hardly anyone does. They say that they are trusting in God, but they are really trusting in the paycheck.

Preachers like to preach to the people about living and giving by faith, but very few preachers live by faith. They know where the money is going to come from. To me, it is not faith, if you know where your paycheck is coming from. Read the life of George Mueller, and you will see what true faith really is.

I have heard more than one preacher say that faith does not pay the bills. It makes me wonder if he even knows the Bible. Faith does not save anyone either, but you cannot get saved without faith. Jesus, through His blood and death and resurrection, saves you. But He will not save you, if you do not believe (have faith) in Him. Faith does not do the saving, but it is the access to salvation. Likewise, faith does not pay the bills, but it is the avenue through which God will pay the bills. You believe God, and watch Him work. Most of us do not truly believe in God. If we did, our whole way of life would change. Faith will pay the bills, if you have faith in God. The Bible clearly says, “Without faith *it is* impossible to please *him* [God]” (Hebrews 11:6). That includes living faith as well as saving faith. You will not be the right kind of believer, if you are not living by faith. Most church members and preachers are not right with God today, because most live by sight and not by faith. God will bring trials in our lives to increase our faith. Faith is not giving up when difficulties come. Faith is knowing that God knows what He is doing. May God help us to truly live by faith.

The third thought in this message is **The People in their Struggle**. Notice how Mary and Martha reacted in this difficult time. We can learn much from them. The Request of the Sisters was their first reaction. Rather than running to everyone else first, they went to the Lord first. When struggles come, go to the Lord. Mary and Martha could physically call on the Lord because He was on the earth, but He is no less near when we pray. He will hear. Stop calling upon others before you call on the Lord. He will answer! He will be there to help!

I am glad that others can pray, but I do not need them to pray for me. I have access to the throne myself through Jesus Christ. He will hear me. The answer may not be what I want, and it may not come when I want it, but God knows what He is doing. I need to rest on Him.

In the midst of their struggle, we can also see the Reliance of the Sisters. Some criticize Mary and Martha for their statements. All I see are two women who respond in the midst of a trial with great faith. They both had faith that Jesus could have healed Lazarus (John 11:21, 32). Martha goes beyond that to give one of the greatest statements in all of Scripture—"I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world" (John 11:27). Mary and Martha both knew who Jesus really was and why He came. They were troubled at Lazarus' sickness and death, but in the hour of trial, both expressed great faith. May we do the same.

The final part of the message is **The Performance of the Savior**. We see the Compassion of Christ in John 11:35—"Jesus wept." Jesus cared for these people—it says so in John 11:5. We do not serve a cold, heartless God. He cares for us too. Hebrews 4:15 describes how Jesus can "be touched with the feelings of our infirmities." Our Savior was human, and had all the emotions that we have. He knows what you are going through. Go to Him!

The account concludes with The Conquest of Christ. He raised Lazarus from the dead. The same God is alive today. He can perform miracles today too. He may not raise your loved one from the dead, or heal your sick body, but He will give you the grace to endure the trial that you are going through. I do not know what you might be enduring, but Do Not Give Up! God Knows what He is Doing!

*(For Part 1 of this message, please see our  
January 2008 NewsLetter.)*