

In Sickness

So the sisters 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 glory so that God's Son may be glorified through it." John 11:3-4

A cloud of heart-rending doom hovers over a Christian family in Bethany. Death, defying all medical skill is stalking Lazarus, the sick brother of Mary and Martha. His strength is failing fast.

Anxious thoughts cross the minds of the sisters in those faith-trying hours. "Why must death take him so is so dear to us? Would that Jesus were here to speak the healing word! Alas, he is far away beyond Jordan!"

Faith surmounts the anguish of the hour by clinging to its firm anchor and hastily dispatching the message to Jesus: *Lord, the one you love is sick*. Hoping that Jesus will restore their brother to health but confessing that their unworthiness doesn't deserve consideration, the sisters simply state their need and appeal to Jesus' love. In humble submission they trust that his wisdom will do what is best.

Jesus' reply comes quickly: *This sickness will not end in death. No, it is for God's glory so that God's Son may be glorified through it*. To that promise and double assurance the sisters and Lazarus are to cling in patient faith and hope as life slowly ebbs away and death settles on his brow.

Four days later, when Jesus' mighty *Come out!* calls Lazarus back to life, he and his sisters experience the marvelous fulfillment of his promise with overwhelming joy. Now they understand the purpose for his sickness and the full import of the words *for the glory of God*, for in raising Lazarus Jesus stands fully revealed as the Resurrection and the Life. His glory was enhanced more by this miracle than if he had only healed Lazarus.

In sickness go to Jesus. His love is ever ready to listen to the prayer of weakest faith and to hear the faintest bleat of his lamb. Cast yourself upon his mercy. Then, like the Bethany family, anchor your faith in his promises and patiently await his answer.

If the death of a loved one is your cross, remember that the golden ray of Christ's promise still shines upon its somber shadow: *Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep; but I am going there to wake him up* (John 11:11). Amen.

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