

Why Jesus Waited for Lazarus to Die

Written by Bill Perkins

"So then he told them plainly,
'Lazarus is dead, and for your sake I am glad I was not there,
so that you may believe.'"

-John 11:14-15

"Glad."

Not for death itself-

His weeping at the tomb reveals His heart.

But glad for the timing.

Glad for the deeper trust this delay would forge.

But why did He wait at all?

He had to.

Only then could He break His disciples' bias-
their instinct to choose death over resurrection.

They needed to see Him raise a dead man to shatter it.

Their bias against resurrection blinded them.

Their experience with death shaped their expectations.

Their fear of Judea narrowed their imagination.

They took Him literally when He said Lazarus was asleep,

thinking He meant rest, not death-

and it kept them from imagining the power

that would soon call a dead man out.

They had witnessed wonders,

but nothing prepared them for this-

a four-day corpse answering the voice of God.

This was resurrection power unveiled.

At the mention of returning to Judea,

fear wrapped around them like grave linen:

"Rabbi, they tried to stone you."

Thomas muttered,

"Let us also go, that we may die with him."

They trusted His miracles,
but not His timing.

So He waited.

And He let Lazarus die.

He arrived to the sting of tears-
the tomb holding the silence where hope had died.

He waited for their sake-
so they would believe.

Because the raising of Lazarus was not sympathy;
it was the reversal of instinct.

Their first response to death was loss.
Their first thought was finality.
Their reflex bent toward what would be taken,
not what God could restore.

Jesus waited so their instinct would change-
so that when loss came,
their first thought would not be,
"Here is what I'm going to lose,"
but,
"I wonder how God will bring resurrection from this."

Then He broke their bias.

"Take away the stone."

Protest rose-
the smell, the scandal, the impossibility.
But His voice cut through like dawn breaking:
"Lazarus, come out!"
And a man walked out wrapped in yesterday,
breathing tomorrow.

You may not know this about Jesus:
He waits until only resurrection will do.

When Jesus says,
"I am the resurrection and the life,"
He means it-
and He proved it:
first at Lazarus's tomb,
then at His own.