



My Dear Brothers and Sisters,

This weekend we hear about the raising of Lazarus from the dead. This story is only told in the Gospel of John. It seems to be John's way of revealing (before the Resurrection) that Jesus has power over death (Matthew, Mark and Luke use the Transfiguration). Here is a man (Lazarus) who has been dead long enough to start rotting, and yet Jesus is able to raise him up. Truly, there is nothing He cannot do!

Following the story line, though, you might question His love for Lazarus, Martha and Mary. When Jesus finds out that Lazarus is ill, the Scripture says, "Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. So when he heard that he was ill, he remained for two days in the place where he was" (John 11:5-6). Staying away when a loved one is sick – especially when you can heal him – doesn't sound very loving. Both Mary and Martha comment on this as well as they say, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died" (John 11:21, 32). Somehow, they recognize that Jesus has power over sickness, and they question: Where were you?

How many times does this happen in our lives? We experience hardship or heartache, we're in over our heads, and we cry out, "Where were you God?! If you had been here, this wouldn't have happened?!!" We feel like God is far away, not the close, loving God we sometimes feel we need. Yet, despite that feeling, God is near. He does love you; He does love me.

Sometimes God has been described as a last-minute-God, and "the God of the 11th hour" – saying that God will come through, but He might wait until the very end. This is said in order to help us trust Him. But the truth of today's Gospel is that He is sometimes the God of the 12th hour... or even the 13th hour. Sometimes, it looks like the deadline has passed, and there is now absolutely no hope. Jesus didn't get there in time to save Lazarus' life. He didn't even come the next day, but four days later. From our perspective – it's way too late. Yet, it was not a sign God didn't love them, but rather wanted to show His power over even death!

In this incredible story, we learn that God is indeed faithful in His love, even when it seems it is too late. Then again, we learned this with Abraham and Sarah, who were childless well into their geriatric years... and then the promise was fulfilled.

Do we believe God is this faithful? Do we believe God really will be true to His promises, even when... especially when it seems impossible? He invites us to trust in Him and His love. When we're feeling broken down, like there is no hope, He is still with us. In fact, it is then He is closest to us, as He has united Himself to us by the Cross.

May we always keep our eyes fixed on the Lord's love for us, especially when He feels distant! May we trust that His love will NEVER fail.