*VBC*

*Pastor John Johnson*

*John 11*

*July 27-28, 2013*

**“When God Disappoints You”**

*INTRO-Dave-God-where were You when I needed you?*

All of us ask this question from time to time

-where were You, when I prayed all these years for dad?

-when we hoped for healing—but nothing changed—and death won out?

-in the story of John 11—Martha wondered-*read vss 1-6*

-Lazarus was dying-Martha and her sister assumed Jesus would come immediately

-after all-there was a unique bond between them

-but vs 6 goes sideways on us--“having heard that Lazarus was sick—He therefore…remained!”

-did not make preparations, did not send a message saying, ‘we’re on our way’

-did not come running to a bereaved family

-this is how it reads--*Jesus intentionally delayed and let Lazarus die*

-was He booked with other ministry engagements? Did He not care? Does it matter that death wins?

-it set up an intense conversation-*read vss 17-20*

-we’re not surprised—we expect Martha to intercept Jesus—she likes to be in control

-we see this same behavior in Luke 10—Martha the obsessive hostess/Mary-the quiet one

-Martha needs answers—she will ask the hard questions

-it has been four days-vs 17

-according to tradition, Rabbinic law, on the fourth day—the teaching was that the lingering soul leaves

-it is a graphic way of saying—the opportunity was missed—*IT IS TOO LATE!!*

-so Martha has words for Jesus-*read vs 21*

-the language could fairly be translated this way—

 *-Lord-if you had been here (which you weren’t), my brother would not have died (which he did)*

-but surprisingly-in the same breath Martha expresses affirmation-*read vs 22*

-Martha is not without faith--I know You can do anything

-(we do the same thing—lament—and then reassure God we still believe)

-but of course this is what is creating the disconnect

-it’s because we believe in God’s power and wisdom and goodness—that what is happening is not making sense

-so Jesus reassures Martha- *read vs 23*

-what we notice in Jesus’ reply is that He offered no explanation—no apologies--for His delay

-we’ve seen this--Jesus does not operate His schedule by people’s expectations—John 2,6, 7

-He operates by a divine clock—that operates on “God’s will” time

-but nonetheless—in these words—He gave Martha the assurance she needed—“your brother will rise again”

-it’s a profound promise—but for Martha—it only goes so far-*read vs 24*

-Martha wants Jesus to know she knows all about resurrection doctrine

-this was standard Jewish teaching-the OT taught an ultimate resurrection-cf Isa 65-66

-but does she really get it? Do we?

-as the conversation unfolds—it is clear *Martha is missing two things—*

-two things that are keeping her stuck in the valley of disappointment

-and maybe today—if you are disappointed in God—especially when it comes to healing—

-it may be the same two things—

*A-A TRUE UNDERSTANDING OF RESURRECTION*

-Martha’s resurrection theology is too thin—meaning--

 1-IT IS TOO ABSTRACT-too textbook-*read vss 25-26*

 -Jesus brings it to the personal—it’s not the first time

 -He does this with His other “I am” statements

 -I am the Bread—come and eat My flesh—and you will never hunger

 -I am the Water—drink from Me and you will never thirst

-here--I am the Resurrection—I AM THE LIFE

-I have come that you may have life-10:10

-he who has the Son has life-I John 5:11

-I am the way, the truth, the LIFE-14:6

-meaning—because of who I am-there is no real death for those who believe

-yes—there is physical death—but it has no ultimate significance, no final word

-that what happens in the present with death is simply a moment—a transition

-it is like sleep—something temporary, and then an awakening

*-in other words—the death of Lazarus is a loss—but not a tragedy*

-meaning death is not the end of the world—for the believer--it is actually the beginning

-your brother is alive—really alive—more alive than he ever was alive—do you believe this?

App-it’s a needed word for sometimes we can be “too pro-life”—pro this life

-so focused on this world—chasing after every technology to hang on—to avoid---LIFE!!!!

-we can’t release—and in part it may be because we have too weak a resurrection theology

-too weak a view of what it means to be with Jesus

-we miss this—*that what is lost is nothing to what is found*

-but more than abstract--Martha’s understanding of the resurrection was too thin because--

2-IT IS FOCUSED ONLY ON THE FUTURE

-on some final event

-but Jesus does not see—“I will be the Resurrection”-I AM!

-meaning the future has burst into the present (1:51)

-there is a “nowness” to the Resurrection

-meaning in Christ-we do not merely await some future resurrection at the end of time

-in some mysterious way—when He died—we died

-when He rose—we rose--*we presently share in the future resurrection*

-this is what Paul writes—

 -He has raised us up with Him and seated us with Him in the heavens-Eph 2:6

 -So if you have been raised with Him—keep seeking the things above-Col 3:1

 -meaning that the life we look forward, the power and joy we will experience in eternity are ours to experience now

*“Resurrection country is no longer an extravagant landscape before which we stand in reverential awe. It is the land we live in”-Peterson*

-we are invited to live eternity in time—where one has no legitimate grounds for worry, despair, hopelessness

-Jesus wants to know if Martha believes *this*

-she tells Jesus she believes *in Him*-*read vs 27*

-to Martha’s credit—she gives one of the most profound declarations of faith—she believes Jesus is the promised Messiah

-but still—she remains disappointed in Him—like everyone else in the story

-and Jesus steps into this disappointment—and it visibly effects Him-*read vss 35-37*

-the words picture a soul in turmoil—gut wrenching emotion

-the same language used when Jesus wept over Jerusalem

-something got to Jesus—what was it?

a-was it sadness?

-a God who weeps when we weep—feels what we feel?

b-it was more—for the language is stronger than mere sadness

-He was provoked—agitated—*but at what?*

 1-some would say at death itself

 -He bristled at the devastation death brings

 -viewing it like a playground bully—evil, death, Satan interfering with the world as it should be

 -death, like sin, is God’s enemy, as it is for us

 2-but the context, the conversation seems to argue for something else--Jesus’ spirit was provoked by unbelief

 -the tendency for people to choose to be overcome by defeat rather than assured by His hope and power

 -the tendency to look at death as the end—as the worst news—rather than death as the transition to a life released from this mortal pain

 -saddened, angered really over those who refused to see Him for who He really was—and what He can really do—AND WHAT HE IS DOING!

Illus-like people at a memorial service who are stuck in disappointment

-grieving like pagans who have no hope—like people who have no real resurrection theology

-missing what God is doing right in front of us

There is one more thing keeping Martha stuck in disappointment—and it might be worse—

-it surfaces at the end of the conversation—

*B-AN UNDERSTANDING OF GOD’S GLORY-read vss 38-40*

-Martha is still attempting to be in control—she is the first one to object over moving the stone

-she has no complete confidence Jesus knows what He is doing

-no real hope anything will change—no substantive understanding of resurrection

-but it is not this Jesus rebukes—it is her unbelief

-she is not seeing how all of this is for God’s glory

-and our eyes can miss this as well

-it’s the first thing we must always ask—how might this reveal, disclose, show God

-for in the end--this is what matters

-belief looks for how God is using this to mark His presence, reveal His character, show His power, display His wisdom, demonstrate His goodness

-this is what he told His disciples in vs 4—“this is for the glory of God”

-the universe was made to make known God—we were made to show Him

-this is why we exist—why churches exist--*this is always the bottom line*

-if we don’t get this—that ultimately in every event, what we pray for, live for, die for—is to disclose God

-then life will not always make sense--LIFE WILL ALWAYS BE UPHILL

-things will always seem confusing

-life with God will always be a disappointment