

## INTRODUCE & WELCOME ONLINE

Well, Happy Easter Fathom Church. He is risen!  
I am so glad to be here with you.

If I haven't met you yet, my name is Chris Martin, and I'm the Lead Pastor here.

If you've got your Bibles, and I hope you do, please open them up to John chapter 11. John 11. That's where we're going to be.

We want every person to have a hand on their Bible. You can open your phone or tablet to John 11.

## INTRODUCTION

This is actually my first in-person Easter here in three years.

That feels crazy,

- but in 2019 during Easter I was not here
  - as I was dealing with some burnout issues,
  - and missed celebrating with you.
- And then last year, I did what we all did on Easter...
  - I sat on my couch in my stretchy pants.

I mean, I'm all for casual church dress...but that was a new level!

So, that makes today so much more special for me.

But the last two Easters were so disappointing for me.

And that's what I want to talk about: **SLIDE DISAPPOINTMENTS.**

- I want to engage those who struggle to believe in God,
- because the way things have played out in life,
- have left us disappointed in him in some way.

## What do you do when God disappoints you?

And for many of us, this question is live right now!

- All your friends are getting married right now, but you aren't.
- Your friends are getting jobs or promotions
  - but it's not working out for you.
  - *"God, why aren't you coming through for me?"*
- Or maybe you are not having kids for whatever reason...
- Or you are approaching retirement
  - and it's not looking good.
- Or your kids didn't turn out right, and you thought,
  - and if you're honest, you're just angry about it.
- Or you're in your 40's and your spouse just walked out.
  - And you're like,
  - *"God, I don't understand how this can be your plan?"*

What do you do when God disappoints you?

## BLANK SLIDE

Well, let's read John chapter 11 and see what we find.

### JOHN 11:1-4

[1] Now a certain man was ill, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. [2] It was Mary who anointed the Lord with ointment and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was ill. [3] So the sisters sent to him, saying, "Lord, he whom you love is ill." [4] But when Jesus heard it he said, "This illness does not lead to death. It is for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it."

## EXPLAIN: CONTEXT

So, here's the set up: you've got 3 siblings. Mary, Martha, and Lazarus. And Jesus has a close relationship with this family.

Well, Lazarus is ill, and the sisters are worried enough to send word to Jesus, obviously wishing him to come and to heal his friend.

- But when Jesus hears this,
- he says something really important.
- "This illness does not lead to death. It is for the glory of God."

Two really important things:

First,

- Jesus does not mean that this sickness is not fatal,
- but that it will not end—ultimately—in death.

But second, Jesus says that **it is for the glory of God**.

- What he means, is there is more here than they can see.

You see, theologically, if you are going through some sort of suffering...

- theologically, it's not meaningless,
- it's not accidental,
- it's not coincidental.
- Whether it's cancer or criticism,
- God is working in our sufferings
- for his glory and for our ultimate good.
- We just may not be able to see that right now.

So, that's the set up. Verse 5:

## JOHN 11:5-6

[5] Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. [6] So, when he heard that Lazarus was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was.

### EXPLAIN: SO

Now, is that weird to you? Cause it's weird to me.

- That word "so" shouldn't be there!
- Maybe a "but"...
- *Jesus loved them, BUT he didn't come for two days.*
- But the SO seems to make it deliberate...

It'd be like me saying,

- "I love my wife, SO I forgot her birthday."
- "I love Chipotle, SO I went to Qdoba."
- "The Rockies love winning, SO the traded Arenado." Too soon?

It just doesn't make sense. Right?

Normally people who you love

- get the immediate attention,
- yet it seems that Jesus is intentionally waiting 2 more days.

### EXPLAIN: GLORY OF GOD

That "so" could also be translated "therefore".

- Jesus loved them...therefore...he said no.
- Jesus did not answer their legit request
  - BECAUSE he loved them.

Why? Well, back to verse 4:

- It is for the glory of God,
- so that the Son of God may be glorified through it.

## TRANSITION

But this is where so many of us get hung up.

- We get hung up on Jesus not meeting our expectations
- of how we think he should act.

We might even want to love Jesus,

- but in some way
- we have been let down...
- because of a *so*.
- We're disappointed.

But our text addresses this. Let's keep reading. Down to verse 17:

## JOHN 11:17

[17] Now when Jesus came, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days.

## EXPLAIN: FOUR DAYS

So, Jesus does come to respond to the crisis his friends face,

- but it's just too late.
- Lazarus is already in the tomb.

But there's an important little note here in the text:

It says Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days.

- You see, there was a superstition in Jesus' day
- that the spirit hovers over the body
- of a deceased person for the first three days,
- but then it departs.
- At that point death is irreversible.

So, the four days ensure that Lazarus is, in fact, dead.

- His spirit is gone.
- There is no resuscitating Lazarus!

This is also why it is important that Jesus is in the grave for three days.

- Jesus was really dead...
- and Jesus really did resurrect...
- This was no mere resuscitation.

So, Jesus is coming on the fourth day, and Martha runs to Jesus first and look at what she says. Verse 20:

### **JOHN 11:20-21**

[20] So when Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, but Mary remained seated in the house. [21] Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died."

## EXPLAIN: MARTHA'S RESPONSE

So, Martha says, *"Why weren't you here? How could you let this happen?"*

This is the same response that Mary will have in verse 32, but you'll notice, they react to this disappointment with Jesus differently.

- Martha responds in one way, and Jesus engages it.
- And Mary responds a different way,
  - and Jesus engages it, as well.

Let's deal with Martha first. Verse 22:

### JOHN 11:22-27

"Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. [22] But even now I know that whatever you ask from God, God will give you." [23] Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again." [24] Martha said to him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day." [25] Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, [26] and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?" [27] She said to him, "Yes, Lord; I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who is coming into the world."

### POINT 1: REASON

In Martha's disappointment with Jesus, she turns to **SLIDE REASON**.

- She wants the reasons why!
- She wants to argue theology and doctrine.
- But she does this in a very interesting way.

Martha starts with what she thinks she's supposed to believe.

- But it's kind of a churchy answer...
- I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.
- This is what she knows she's supposed to say...
- it's theologically correct...
- but deep down inside, she doesn't believe it. Right?

You ever do this?

- You say, *"God has a purpose for everything"*
  - when inside you're actually screaming,
- *"how could there possibly be a purpose in this!"*

Just so we can all feel safe together:

- how many of you have found those shallow churchy answers
  - a bit underwhelming?

They may even be true...

- but they just don't have the depth needed
- to deal with the complexity of life.

It happens all the time on Facebook and Instagram,

- where these little kind of spiritualized quotes are there.
- And the quotes aren't necessarily wrong...
- they're just not right!

Thankfully Jesus doesn't play this game with Martha.

Cause he goes on to challenge her shallow answer with depth.

- He says, "I am the resurrection. I am the life."
- He answers her REASON with good reasonable theology.

**BLANK SLIDE**



## APPLICATION

And if this is you...

- maybe you loved Jesus once,
- or you may even want to love him now...
- but you've just got questions about this and that.

I would say this to you:

- there are more than trite bumper sticker one-liners to be found.
  - There are good, reasonable, deep,
  - rational answers to many of your questions.

We won't answer them all today...ok?

But I would challenge you that you won't find those answers if you simply play in the shallow end.

- Don't settle for the trite,
- but dig deep.
- Jesus will meet you there.

But he will ask you the same question he asks Martha: **Do you believe this?**

## TRANSITION

So, that's Martha's disappointment.

But Mary responds differently. Verse 32:

## JOHN 11:32

**[32] Now when Mary came to where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet, saying to him, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died."**

## EXPLAIN: SAME QUESTION

So, she says the exact same thing!

- “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.”
- To Martha, Jesus said, “I am the resurrection and the life.”
  - In other words,
  - he meets her with REASON.
  - He gave her truth.
  - He gave her theology.
- Now, Mary says the exact same thing.
  - But to Mary, what did Jesus say?
  - He says nothing.

Look at verse 33:

## JOHN 11:33-35

[33] When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in his spirit and greatly troubled. [34] And he said, “Where have you laid him?” They said to him, “Lord, come and see.” [35] Jesus wept.

## POINT 2: COMPASSION

- Jesus doesn’t bring Mary reasonable theology
  - like he did for Martha.
- He just weeps with her.

To Martha, it was REASON.

To Mary, Jesus responds with **SLIDE COMPASSION**.

- Jesus IS able to address Martha's disappointment with TRUTH.
- But now Jesus addresses Mary's disappointment...
  - by feeling what she felt.

Jesus is the one who gives truth...AND Jesus is the one who weeps.

## SUFFERING COMMENTS

Goodness, you ever have someone try to help you out with truth when you just need them to weep with you?

Sometimes people say the dumbest things when you're in pain:

- *"You know, all things happen for a reason."*
- *"Don't cry, she's in a better place."*
- *"You know, you're gonna see him again."*
  - *"Well, I might just send you to see him right now!"*

Listen:

- Truth and reason are sometimes needed.
- But sadness and compassion are also needed.

And every time you cry out to God,

- you pray to a God who weeps with you in your pain.
- He doesn't just respond with logic...
- he responds with COMPASSION.

**BLANK SLIDE**

## ILLUSTRATION: SHOTS

It's like when I'd take my daughter to the doctor when she was little. I'd take her to see her pediatrician, Dr. Kelly.

- And Dr. Kelly comes in...
- and she does the check-up on Harper...
- and it's all going smooth...
- until the very end of the appointment...

Because at the very end of the appointment

- Dr. Kelly says,
- "Well, that's it..."
- except for two shots."
- And Harper freaks out!

And listen, rightly so! Ok?

- I just got my COVID vaccine...
- and man, it was like someone hit me with a bat!

But she's little...and she doesn't know the shots are for her good!

And so, Dr. Kelly says, *"It's time for the shots."*

- And I had to sit my little girl on my lap...
- and she starts fighting me.
- She doesn't want to go through it.

And so, I have to grab her arms.

- And grab her legs.
- And overpower her with my strength.
- While Dr. Kelly sticks two needles into her legs.

And she looks at me...with tears...just crying, “Daddy...no! Daddy...why?”

And listen, all the truth I can muster won't help.

- I show her that poster of all the sick and dying kids on the wall
- to try to convince her that a shot is better than lockjaw...
  - which is a real creepy poster in a pediatrician's office, yo!
- But it doesn't matter.
- All the truth doesn't matter.

In that moment,

- she just needs me to hold her,
- and to rock her,
- and let a few tears of my own roll down.

Because the TRUTH is, she needs the shots.

- But she also needs her daddy,
- who loves her,
- and can weep with her in this.

## TRANSITION

Some of you today don't need a Jesus with reasonable answers.

- But because of your disappointments,
- you're saying, “*Jesus, if you had been here!*”
- And I'm just saying,
  - he weeps with you.
  - He's compassionate towards you.
  - Because he loves you.

Now, one last piece this morning. Look at verse 38:

## JOHN 11:38-44

[38] Then Jesus, deeply moved again, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone lay against it. [39] Jesus said, "Take away the stone." Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, "Lord, by this time there will be an odor, for he has been dead four days." [40] Jesus said to her, "Did I not tell you that if you believed you would see the glory of God?" [41] So they took away the stone. And Jesus lifted up his eyes and said, "Father, I thank you that you have heard me. [42] I knew that you always hear me, but I said this on account of the people standing around, that they may believe that you sent me." [43] When he had said these things, he cried out with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out." [44] The man who had died came out, his hands and feet bound with linen strips, and his face wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Unbind him, and let him go."

## EXPLAIN: RESURRECTION

Now listen,

- it's one thing to claim to be the arrival
- of **the resurrection and the life.**

But Jesus insists to go to the tomb.

- And coming to the tomb
- he commands them to move the stone
- that was covering the entrance to the tomb.
  - Sound familiar to the Easter story?
- They say: *"But he's been dead for four days!"*
- *There will be an odor."*

But Jesus reiterates what he's said for this whole chapter...

**"If you believe you will see the glory of God!"**

- And they move the stone away...
- And in a loud voice Jesus cries, **"Lazarus, come out."**
- And a dead man walks out of a tomb!

### **APPLICATION: METAPHOR**

And church, this is a baseline metaphor for what Jesus came to do in his resurrection.

We can take it to mean this:

- **what happened to Lazarus is what happens to all of us!**

I said this on Friday, but I'll say it again!

- We aren't immoral people who need to get moral.
- We aren't sick people who need to get better.
- We aren't weak people in need of a life-coach.
- We aren't good people, and we just need Jesus to come in and push us over the edge.

**No! We are dead people. And we need to be brought back to life!**

### **POINT 3: FREEDOM**

And for some of you,

- your disappointment isn't actually with Jesus today...
- but rather, your disappointment is with YOU!
  - You believe all this stuff about the resurrection,
  - but you have yet to have the full life that Jesus promises.

And it's my final point.

- Jesus offers REASON...
- he offers COMPASSION...
- and he offers **SLIDE FREEDOM**.

Jesus offers FREEDOM!

After Lazarus comes out of the tomb, Jesus says,

- *“Get those grave clothes off of him.”*

Why?

- Cause he's alive now.
- Living people don't need to wear grave clothes!
  - They stink,
  - they're restrictive,
  - they bind you up.
  - They don't fit you anymore.

**BLANK SLIDE**

## ILLUSTRATION: LAZ

Now, imagine if a couple weeks later you were at a dinner party with Jesus, and Lazarus showed up.

- And you're sitting down to eat,
- and Jesus says, *“Hey, who's that mummy over there?”*

And Lazarus is like,

- *“It's me, boss! Hey, it's me, Laz! The one you love!”*



Jesus would be like,

- *“Bro, what are you doing?”*
- *“Why are you still in your grave clothes?”*
- *“You’re ruining dinner!”*
- *“Those things are ripe, yo.”*
- *“They stink!”*

And Laz is like,

- *“Oh yeah, well, they’re comfortable...”*
- *“I just haven’t gotten to taking them off...”*
- *“And man, they’re kinda hard to get out of.”*

You know, that’s what a lot of Christians do!

## **APPLICATION**

Listen to me, if you are a Christian, here’s what has happened to you:

- You were dead in your trespasses.
- You were in the grave.

And at just the right time

- Jesus stepped into your life
- and he called YOUR name.

And he said,

- *“Come out!”*
- And you went from death to life.

And even though you were made alive,

- you were still all wrapped up in the clothes
- of your former deadness.
- And so, he says,
  - *“Now it’s time to take those clothes off.*
  - *That stuff doesn’t fit you anymore.*
  - *That’s not who you are anymore.*
  - *Those are clothes for the dead...*
  - *and you are alive!”*

You don’t have to keep doing the things that you used to do...

because you aren’t the same person that you used to be.

- Jesus died not only to release you from the penalty of your sin,
- but from the power of your sin.

And some of you need to take off your grave clothes.

## CONCLUSION

Here’s the point for us all: **SLIDE WITH PADS**

## JESUS IS THE ANSWER TO YOUR DISAPPOINTMENTS

He has REASON and truth to offer you

- on the deep questions you have.
- He’s not scared of those doubts!
- He says, *“Pick up your doubts and follow me!”*

He has COMPASSION and tears

- to weep with you in your pain.
- He's not just the one with the logical answers...
- he bears with us in love.

And Jesus offers us FREEDOM.

- Freedom from sin, death, and hell.
- Freedom from all those things.
- But also, freedom to be alive.
- To truly live!

Jesus is the answer to your disappointments. **BLANK SLIDE**

## ENDING

You know, it's interesting, but we only have three accounts of Jesus crying in the Bible.

- We see him cry right here with Mary.
- He cries over Jerusalem before entering the city on holy week

And we see him cry out in desperation

- in the Garden of Gethsemane.
- Sweating drops of blood.
- Asking, "*Father, if there be any other way...*"
- But there was no other way.

And so, Jesus is crucified and he dies,

- and just like Lazarus,
- he is put in a tomb.

And for three days it seemed hope was lost.

But on the third day,

- the Spirit of God resurrected Jesus,
- and he comes out of that tomb
- to prove that he really is the resurrection and the life.

Do you believe this?

Some of you are alive in Christ,

- but you have used pain as an excuse
- to put graveclothes back on.
- And today, Easter Sunday,
- it's time to take them off.

But listen, some of you are dead like Lazarus.

- Spiritually speaking, you are dead.
- You've been walking through this life...trying your best,
- but you are dead.

And if you are feeling any of this today...

- maybe you can't explain it,
- but you can't deny it...
- that is the work of the Holy Spirit wooing at you...
- bidding you to come.
- Calling your name, "*Lazarus, come out.*"

Some of you need to surrender to Jesus.

So, I want to invite you to pray with me today. **PRAY**

## RESPONSES:

Well, every week at Fathom we respond in 4 ways:

- COMMUNION – THE LORD’S SUPPER
- GIVING TITHES & OFFERINGS – [fathomchurch.org/give](http://fathomchurch.org/give)
- PRAYER - [fathomchurch.org/prayer](http://fathomchurch.org/prayer)
- SINGING

So, I’m going to read the Words of Institution from the Apostle Paul, we’ll take communion, and then we’ll sing:

### 1 CORINTHIANS 11:23–26 – WORDS OF INSTITUTION

[23] For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, [24] and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, “This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” **TAKE**

[25] In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.” **TAKE**

[26] For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.

Love you church, oh, he is risen! Let’s stand and sing together.

## **RESOURCES USED:**

- Carson, D.A. The Gospel According to John.
- Kostenberger, Andreas. A Theology of John's Gospel and Letters.
- Morris, Leon. The Gospel According to John.
- Sproul, RC. John.