

Wall of Prayer



Dear Faithful Prayer Warriors,

As we open our 2024 calendars, the joy of upcoming weddings, the birth of babies, a summer vacation, or an upcoming graduation or two may highlight the dates. But for some, the heaviness of sickness or loss, broken relationships or disappointment may be hovering over its empty pages. Will the treatment be effective in the coming days? Will the loved one who has gone astray come to her senses and return to the Lord and to our family? Will the job opportunity pan out? Will the marriage make it? Will the gaping hole left from the loss of a loved one ever heal? We have a Savior Who is our closest friend. We know that He loves us and that He hears our prayers and is able to heal and restore and comfort...but when? Do you hear yourself asking, "How long, Lord?"

Jesus had dear friends He visited when He was in the area of Bethany.¹ He stayed in the home of Lazarus and his sisters, Mary and Martha, sharing wonderful meals where they lingered over good food and drink and deep conversation. This friendship was so intimate, that when Lazarus became quite ill, the sisters sent word to Jesus saying simply, "Lord, behold, he whom you love is sick." Their confidence in Jesus's deep affection for Lazarus led them to believe Jesus would come soon to heal their brother. But Jesus's submission to His Father's plan was so perfect that He waited two days after receiving the message. By the time Jesus did arrive, Lazarus had been dead four days.

The sisters were distraught as they each greeted Jesus with, "If only you had been here, my brother would not have died." Jesus's tender discussion with Martha led to her confession, "Yes Lord, I believe that You are the Christ, the Son of God, who is come into the world." And, as Mary later fell at Jesus feet weeping, Jesus was so overcome with His love for this dear friend and the devastating effect of sin on the world (death) that He was troubled in His spirit and, He too, wept. God Himself, in the flesh, hurt for His friends and was so troubled by the sting of death, that He cried. Can I tell you that He weeps with us as well? The effects of sin in our world are heart wrenching, and He is acquainted with our sorrow and grief.² Please be encouraged as I have been, that God hesitates in answering our prayers for His purposes and glory, and for our ultimate good?

Jesus miraculously called Lazarus to come out of the dark tomb. The picture of Lazarus coming forth, shedding the smelly bindings of death, is a picture of Jesus calling us forth from spiritual death to new life in Him. From the dank depths of sin and shame He shouts our name and calls us forth to new life. I have begun to picture that scene when I pray for those who are lost or those who have strayed, or those who find themselves in the dark shadows of sin, broken relationships or illness.

Soon, Jesus returned to Bethany to a meal celebrating Lazarus's resurrection. Martha worshiped with her loving preparation and serving the meal, while Mary once again sat at Jesus's feet. There she took out a pound of very expensive oil (worth a year's wages) and began to anoint Jesus's head. With her hair, her glory and crown, she washed His feet. She had listened intently to Jesus in the times He had been in their home and now emptied this expensive burial balm over Her Lord, preparing Him for His death. The fragrance of her worship would linger in the area for some time. Above all else, may we love and worship our Lord as Mary and Martha did. And may our prayer and praise be, "Whom have I in heaven but You? And earth has nothing I desire besides You." Psalm 73:25.

In Him,

Susan Admire

¹ The account given here is found in John 11:1-44

² Isaiah 53:3-5