

Show Me How You Trust

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Texts: John 12: 1-11

Welcome to the Fifth Sunday of Lent! We have our Lenten theme this year of Jesus our Center, with today's special theme focusing on Jesus and Trust. Friends, I am going to be completely transparent, and tell you that it took nothing but trust in God to get me through writing this sermon! When the text was given to me, I opened my Bible, read it one time, and immediately closed the Bible shut! It took some time to fathom how to paint the picture of trust through this text. However, through trust in God, and reminding myself to keep Jesus in the center of my mind during this process, alas! We have a complete sermon!

In the verses that we have for today, there is such a rich and wholesome atmosphere being shared among those who have come to celebrate this great miracle that Jesus has performed of raising Lazarus from the dead. And in this atmosphere, that's occurring, we are given multiple examples of trust through Lazarus, Mary, Martha, and Judas.

The first person we see here exemplifying trust is Lazarus. It is personally my favorite example, as it depicts a level of simplicity. In verse two it states "Here a dinner was given in Jesus' honor. Martha served, while Lazarus was among those reclining at a table with him". So how is Lazarus showing his trust in Jesus? By simply showing up to this dinner. Being in the presence of Jesus knowing that He raised Lazarus from the dead. Knowing that if Jesus can do this for me, raise me up from death, then how else may I show my trust than to be in the very presence of Him and give my thanks? As I looked to the previous chapter in John to get a better understanding of this portion of the text, it stated in chapter 11 verse 6 through 7, "So when he heard that Lazarus was sick, he stayed where he was for two more days, and then he said to his disciples, 'Let us go back to Judea.'" In the same chapter, in verse 17 it says, "On his arrival, Jesus found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days." Now, after reading and pondering on these texts I was astonished to read that Jesus did not rush back once he heard about Lazarus. Jesus made the decision to remain where he was for 48 whole hours. And then upon arrival, he finds out that Lazarus has been dead for *four* days. And just like that, Jesus commands him to rise, and he rises. Lazarus needed Jesus when he was sick, before he had died. However, even after death, Jesus still showed up and renewed the breath in his lungs. Lazarus is at that table because even though Jesus did not come when he was first sick, he still trusts in Jesus' timing. Jesus' timing may be delayed to us, but one is

to trust that *his* timing is everything. This whole scenario dealing with Lazarus reminds me of a song by a gospel singer named Tye Tribbett called *Same God*. The main chorus goes: *if he did it before, he can do it again! Same God back then, Same God right now!* Through what Lazarus has experienced, it should remind us to know the miracles Jesus has done for us and to trust that he will do it again and again and again.

Lazarus is not the only one showing how he trusts in verse two. Next up we have one of his sister's Martha who also depicts a wholesome level of simplicity.

Going back to the first half of verse two in our text it reads "Here a dinner was given in Jesus' honor. Martha served..." That's it! That is all! That is how Martha showed her trust in Jesus. It's as if Martha dropped the mic and walked away. But this act of kindness, this act of trust is not small in any way. The text gets straight to the point with Martha's role here at the dinner. Martha served (hand gesture emphasizing the two words). She's cooking, she's cleaning, she's entertaining, she's being a good host! And why? Because she trusted God then when her brother Lazarus was sick, and she trusts God now after seeing her brother right in front of her at the dinner table. Back in chapter 11 verse 21 it states "Lord," Martha said to Jesus, "if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But I know that even now God will give you whatever you ask." So even though Martha mourned the loss of her brother and did not understand the delay in time it took Jesus to arrive, she still trusted in Jesus' ways. She said, "But I know that even now God will give you whatever you ask." Martha serving at this celebration speaks volumes. It says that even though we may trust God to do one thing, God shows up with something even more astounding than the original request. That the trust that we place in God never goes unrecognized. And as Martha's response, she serves Jesus at this celebration, representing the trust she kept then, and the trust she now has moving forward.

Now, we are introduced to Lazarus' second sister, Mary. As we return to chapter 11, Mary does not have the same response to Jesus' arrival as her sister. She says in verse 32 "Lord if you had been here, my brother would not have died." She began to weep after saying these words. But after seeing this grand miracle performed, Mary along with her siblings showed her restored trust in Jesus by conducting a holy ritual for him. In verse 3 of our text it says that not only did she pour a pint of expensive perfume on Jesus' feet, but she wiped it off with her hair. She performed such an intimate ritual for Jesus to express her newly restored trust in him. She went from weeping and mourning, to trusting his ways through blessing him. There are times where we may not see our prayers come to pass in the way we anticipate. And in that moment, we must not weep and doubt God but place even more trust in our Creator knowing

that something greater is about to occur. And how do we do this? How does one show trust? We see Lazarus in the presence of Jesus. We see Martha serving, and we see Mary anointing. So, what is there for us to do? Well we can be in the presence of Jesus through our being in constant prayer, constantly in worship, not just telling God, but actively seeking God. Resting in God. Even when we feel as though there is a delay, and God is not moving at the speed we desire or moving in the direction we have mapped out.

Up until now we have seen three incredible examples of how trust has been shown to Jesus. However, there is one person in this text whose trust is placed elsewhere.

In verses four through eight, there is an encounter with Judas, the disciple who eventually betrays Jesus (booooo). During the ritual Mary is conducting, Judas is baffled and voices how the perfume could be sold worth an entire year's wages and given to the poor. It was mentioned in the text that Judas was not concerned for the poor, but actually for himself. So why bring Judas into this sermon? Why not just end after receiving three amazing examples of what trust looks like? Well, Judas does trust Jesus. He is one of his disciples after all. Which means he has seen time after time Jesus perform miracles and wonders unlike any stranger or friend that comes across him. So, it's not that Judas does not trust, it is that he wants to utilize that trust for himself. He knows that all things are possible and therefore wants all of the riches. He has lost that "wow factor" of seeing Jesus perform miracles. My friends, I am telling you this so that no matter how many times you are faced with having to trust Christ, you never trust for your own gain. So that no matter how many times you are blessed, it does not become just another event and you lose sight of the awe that is placed in your life. I am telling you this because trust is not something you just casually say or think. Trust is a *response*. And these people here have made a choice of how they wanted to respond to Jesus. Whether you are trusting God to do something to you, for you, or around you, your response to what you need is how you trust.

The original verse given to me for today ended at verse eight. However, I could not leave out verses nine-eleven. The text says "Meanwhile a large crowd found out that Jesus was there and came, not only because of him but also to see Lazarus, whom he raised from the dead. So, the chief priests made plans to kill Lazarus as well, for on account of him many were going over to Jesus and believing in him." I needed this portion of the text in here because even in the midst of trusting Jesus there will always be a distraction or someone to divert you away. In these verses we have a chief who not only wants Jesus dead, but the living miracle himself Lazarus, all due to his lack of trust in Jesus. But remember the atmosphere that is painted at this dinner table, the amount of trust and love that fills the space. Even in the

midst of someone that does not trust in Jesus such as this chief, there is an abundance of grace surrounding them. To the point where there is a crowd of those wanting to know and see the miracle Jesus has conducted. This crowd came to see if the miracle was true, and once they believed, their response was to stay in the presence of Jesus, as they now trusted him. We may not know the plan of God. Not one person sitting at this table knew what Jesus had up his sleeve. However, they are at this table as their response to continue with their faith in God. Through grief, through confusion, through anger, and through the delays, First Church I ask and strongly move you, to show God how you trust.

Let it all be done in the Name of our Lord and Savior, Amen.

