

# Keeping it Real by Going Deeper!

(GBC Sunday August 16<sup>th</sup> 2020 - Ps Ben C)

The Passage & The Message: John 11:1-45 – How Can I Be Sure That God Is Good When There Is So Much Pain And Suffering?

## Getting Started:

Has anything ever happened to you that you thought was really bad at the time, but looking back on it from hindsight you can see that God used it for good?

## Open in Prayer:

## Going Deeper:

Sunday's message was built around 2 main foundations that are all through the Bible, but the message focussed on how they come up in John 11:1-45.

**Firstly – Perspective – God doesn't always do what we think is good in a timeframe that suits us because he sees things from a different perspective. But he is always working out his plan for good.** In John 11, this plays out when Jesus waits until Lazarus has died before he goes and intervenes in the situation. He waited because, as good as healing Lazarus would have been, he had something better in mind (see John 11:1-15).

Q 1. What **Stood** out to you most from this first point and is this helpful?

Q 2. What **Puzzled** you or troubled you or caused you to ask questions about anything that you hadn't necessarily thought about much before, due to this first point?

Q 3. What did you **Learn** about God and His people, from this first point?

Q 4. Can you think of any other times in the Bible where this point applies?

Q 5. This idea is easy to hold on to when things are going well, but it's easy to forget about when real difficulty comes along. How can we hold onto this truth when pain and suffering come?

Q 6. How does this idea affect our prayer lives?

**Secondly – Presence – God doesn't abandon us in pain and suffering. Instead, he offers his presence which has a number of aspects to it**

- He is present with us as someone who can really sympathise with us, no matter what we go through, as someone who has gone there before us. He doesn't ever put us through anything he

**hasn't gone through personally himself.** When Lazarus died, Jesus lost a loved one as well. He really knows what it's like to lose a loved one. He also knows personally what every other form of suffering is like (John 11:28-38, See also Isaiah 53)

- **He is present with us as one in whom we find everything we need to face whatever it is we have to face.** Martha wanted Lazarus resurrected back to life right then and there. Jesus said to her, 'I AM the resurrection and the life', exactly what she thought she needed (John 11:21-26).
- **He will be present with us forever. And he has promised that a day is coming when he will return and take us to a place with no pain and suffering and when we're there he will be present with us in a much more full and wonderful way. And on that day he will personally wipe every tear from our eyes until we won't even remember the pain we've gone through in this world. It won't even come to mind (John 11:25-26).**

Q 1. What **Stood** out to you most from this second point and is this helpful?

Q 2. What **Puzzled** you or troubled you or caused you to ask questions about anything that you hadn't necessarily thought about much before, due to this second point?

Q 3. What did you **Learn** about God and His people, from this second point?

Q 4. How can we seek the comfort of God's present presence and the hope of future presence with him in the new creation in times of pain and suffering?

Q 5. Of these two main points – perspective and presence – what did Jesus offer to Mary and Martha when they were in the midst of suffering?

For the people we meet who are suffering, what's going to be more helpful as we seek to care for them: reminding them to get their *perspective* right (e.g. "you know, this is pretty tough now but in 10 years' time you'll realise that this worked out for good"), or offering your *presence* (i.e. simply being there for them)? Why? What's been most helpful for you?

**Lastly Ask Yourself:**

What will you **Talk** to God or others about?

a. So what things are we taught about God within these verses **that we can tell others** be they church or un-church, converted or un-converted.

List them below:

b. So what will you now **talk to God** about this verse and message?

Will you pray differently? Will you come to Him with greater awareness of His sovereignty, love, and power? Are there attitudes or patterns of thinking that you feel you need to confess to Him? Are there new ways you want to express your thanks to him? Please take the time you need to turn your Going Deeper into real prayer.

Grace and Peace to you as we **'Keep it Real by Going Deeper'** by taking both God's and our concerns to Him through prayer.