

HAS GOD EVER LEFT YOU HANGING?

Nate Birr

Has God ever left you hanging? Have you ever asked Him for help—maybe pleaded, maybe cried out in desperation for it—and gotten no answer? And I'm not talking about when you ask for a new PlayStation under the Christmas tree or a promotion that doubles your salary and vacation time. I'm talking about when that family member is really sick. I'm talking about that relationship that is strained and fraying and in danger of breaking. I'm talking about a job being in jeopardy and not being sure how you're going to provide for your family. I've been connected to this church for almost 40 years, and I've observed many instances of God answering exactly those kinds of prayers. He has healed, He has restored, He has provided. Scripture is full of examples of God doing the same thing for His people. And we read in Psalm 46 that God is "a refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble" and in II Corinthians 12 that says "My grace is sufficient for you." Of course He would never not be there for us.

And yet, I ask, Has God ever left you hanging? Left someone you love hanging? Has He ever *not* fixed the problem, and not only that, has He not even given you some form of assurance—no Bible verse comes to mind to calm the anxiety, no friend drops by at just the right moment to cheer you up, no feeling or sensing that God is with you? Just absolute and utter silence.

Some of you, although you may not be doing it physically, are nodding along with me. You've been left hanging, or know someone who has. Maybe you're in that place right now, in dire need of God's help and He's not responding. Others of you are balking at this idea. You've never experienced anything like this—praise the Lord!—and it doesn't match what you know about God from Scripture. And so you're sitting up a little straighter in your seat. You're seeing red flags waving. Be honest, some of you are wondering why Pastor agreed to let this guy preach.

If the very premise that God would leave someone hanging upsets you, let me try to alleviate your concern by saying that when God has left us hanging, it might actually be that it only *seems* or *feels* like God has left us hanging. Our sin, our selfishness, the messy world we live in can all cloud the lens through which we view our circumstances. We can also have wrong ideas about what God's Word says because we haven't studied it carefully or have just taken someone else's word for what it says, or have turned verses into slogans that don't really mean what we make them mean. That said, it is true—and I say that with scriptural backing—that there are times when God leaves us hanging—when we cry out to Him with real, serious problems, and He does nothing to help us.

This morning, we're going to look at two people in Scripture who experience that very thing. They call out to God for help, and He doesn't even respond to them, much less move quickly to fix the problem. And as we look at these two people, we're going to draw five observations about who God is and how He works. We have to be careful though. God never changes—I want to be very clear on that. But we also can't reduce God to a mathematical formula, and look at how He worked in one situation and think it's an exact pattern we can apply our situation. But we can understand from these observations who God is, where His heart lies, and how He might be—in fact, how He is likely to be—working when He has left us—or it seems that He has left us—hanging.

If you've got a Bible, please turn with me to the book of John, chapter 11. If you don't have one with you, there's a Bible under the chair in front of you. This is a familiar story to many of you, and we're not going to read it all because it's about 45 verses long. But I encourage you to have your Bible open as we're going to be jumping around from verse to verse.

John chapter 11 tells us the story of a man named Lazarus, but today we're looking at the story of his sisters Mary and Martha. And in the first couple of verses, we read that Lazarus is sick. Mary and Martha know who Jesus is. They know what He has done and can do, and they cry out to God for help: "Please save our brother's life!"

What does Jesus do? Look at the text. He doesn't even bother to pack, He just slips on his sandals and hurries to Bethany, places His hands on Lazarus and says, "Be well," and Lazarus sits up, blinks a few times, and says, "What's for dinner?" - - - No, He doesn't do that. Nor does Jesus send word back to the sisters saying, "Don't worry, I'll fix it,

everything will be okay. Just be patient.” He doesn’t even send word saying, “I’m sorry, I know this must be hard for you, and I’ll be here to comfort you.” What does Jesus do? Verse 6: *He stayed two days longer in the place where He was.*

We might know the end of the story, but remember, we’re looking at this from Mary and Martha’s perspective. In that moment, they had cried out to God for help, and He did nothing. He left them hanging without a solution and without so much as a response to their plea. They had to watch as the situation deteriorated and their brother went from sick to dead. Again I ask, have you ever been there? Are you there right now? Has God left you hanging?

We’re going to draw five observations from this passage. The first is found in verses 3 and 5 where we read that Jesus loved Lazarus and his sisters. Now, you might be thinking, that’s not exactly a news flash, that God loves us. But think for a moment about someone you love—maybe a family member, or a good friend. And imagine that they’re really sick—I’m not even talking terminally—I mean, they’ve got food poisoning and they’re puking up their guts all night, or they have one of those really bad colds where they’re stuffed up and hacking and coughing and are just miserable. Or think of a child who falls and scrapes his knee or bumps her head. If you had the power with a snap of your fingers or a touch of your hand or merely by your word to instantly ease their suffering, loving them as you do, wouldn’t you make the pain stop?

We equate loving someone with not allowing them to suffer. And therefore we assume that if God loves us, He won’t let us suffer. And conversely, if He lets us suffer, He must not love us. We may not think that overtly, or certainly say it out loud to our Christian friends, but deep in our hearts and heads, we start to question it—since God is allowing me to suffer, does He really love me. Friends, that is a lie from the devil. If we believe the Bible to be true, then we have a very clear contradiction of that lie in John 11. We’re told that Jesus loved Mary and Martha, and yet they were clearly allowed to suffer as they saw Lazarus get sick, get sicker, and die, and have Jesus do nothing when they called out for help. When you’re suffering, please don’t fall for the lie that God does not love you. We may not understand why He allows us to go through the valley, it may not make sense to us, but Scripture tells us that God’s loving us and His allowing us to suffer are not mutually exclusive.

The Bible doesn’t merely *tell* us of God’s love; it *shows* us His love. In verse 7—and again in verses 11 and 15—Jesus proposes going to Lazarus in Judea. “Rabbi,” the disciples protest in verse 8, “the Jews were just now seeking to stone You, and are You going there again?” What is Jesus’ response? “Ah, good point. Come to think of it, I don’t actually need to be there. I transcend time and space. Lazarus is healed remotely!” No. He goes, to Bethany, into the heart of danger.

Now, you could argue that Jesus knew He wasn’t in any immediate danger. Several times in Scripture we read that He avoided or eluded harm because “His time had not yet come.” But what about when His time *had* come? In Luke 9, Jesus twice predicts His death. Then in verse 51 we read, “When the days were approaching for His ascension, He was determined to go to Jerusalem.” The NIV says he set out “resolutely” for Jerusalem. The picture here is of Him gritting his teeth and pushing forward into what He knows is coming. Remember, the ascension that is approaching comes *after* His brutal torture and death. We see this same determination again in the Garden of Gethsemane, where Jesus prays, “Father, if You are willing, remove this cup from Me,” but then “not my will, but Yours be done.” We see it in Him going to the cross and dying in our place. Pain, suffering, hardship never deterred Jesus, such was—such is—His love for us. Never doubt God’s love for you, because He showed it to you in the most dramatic of fashions!

Jump back to John 11 verse 4, and we’ll see our second observation. Jesus said, “This sickness is not to end in death.” Please note He doesn’t say this sickness will not *involve* death, but this sickness is not to *end* in death.

Many of you know that I am a self-published author. I’ve written more than a dozen action/adventure novels stemming from my love of action and adventure novels or movies—A few years ago I went to see the latest at the time *Mission Impossible* movie in the theater, and it was an experience like I’d never had in that for two and a half hours I was on the edge of my seat—technically I was splayed out in one of those recline-a-lounger chairs they have at the theater, but metaphorically, I was on the edge of my seat—because the movie was constantly at a climax, and I was anxious to see how it all turned out, to see if Tom Cruise would really save the day and everyone he loved would survive. That’s why I write books, to try to recreate that moment. But you know what? When I’m writing and I come to that climactic moment when it’s do-or-die for my hero . . . I’m never nervous. I’m not on the edge of my seat with anxiety or

anticipation. Now, you could argue that's because I'm not a very good writer, but I like to think it's because I already know how the story's going to play out. Nothing can happen to my character unless I "allow" it to happen.

Jesus was fully human, and in places in Scripture we read that He learned things or found things out. But He was also fully divine, and often looked into people's hearts or knew what they were thinking. In this case, the omniscience—that is, the all-knowing nature—of God was on display and Jesus knew that the sickness Lazarus was experiencing would not *end* in death. It didn't catch Him off guard. It didn't make Him nervous or uncertain. Just like that diagnosis from the doctor didn't catch Him off guard. He wasn't surprised by or nervous because of that factory layoff. The news that your teenage daughter is pregnant isn't news to Him.

God knows the end. More than that, He's in control of the end. Now, we have to be careful here. I do not believe Scripture teaches that God is a giant puppet master, pulling billions of strings and causing every single event that happens to happen. Unlike the characters in my books, we have free will and can make choices. But Scripture is clear that God is sovereign over everything that happens. We see this in the beginning of the book of Job, where the devil comes before God and is only allowed to bring harm to Job once God lifts His hand of protection and allows it. We could spend hours—ask my Monday night men's Bible study if you don't believe me—we could spend hours and hours and hours discussing the interplay between the sovereignty of God and the free will of man. Wherever we fall on that spectrum, one thing is clear: God is sovereign, and nothing has happened, is happening, or can happen to any of us if He does not permit it. And while that doesn't provide us the answer to the question of *why*, it should bring us comfort to know that someone who loves us as much as God does is also in control of our situation.

God loves us, and our second observation is that God knows and is in control of the end game. That leads us to our third observation, which is found in the second half of verse 4. *This sickness is not to end in death, but for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified by it.*

My sister was due to give birth to her seventh child this week. But on March 16th, she wasn't feeling her baby move the way she felt she should have, and ended up going into the hospital. That night, my nephew Elijah was born via emergency C-section. Two days later, he was taken down to the NICU in Madison because of some complications and ultimately to have more tests run. He's still in the NICU today, and has been diagnosed with Hirschsprung's Disease and Down Syndrome. It has been an incredibly hard and stressful time for my family and, as you might guess, I've done a lot of praying over the last month. And I have to admit, my prayers have not often been that God would be glorified; they have been that Elijah would be all right. My natural inclination in hard times is not to seek God's glory; it's to seek what I want—it's to seek the quickest possible fix to my problem. I'm sure many of you can relate.

Romans 8:28 is a Bible verse that is far too often used tritely or dismissively—or turned into a slogan. But Romans 8:28 is biblical truth. *And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.* We like to read that and read the word "good" and assume that God is going to fix everything, that our story will turn out like Job's, with bigger houses and more money and better relationships than we had. And our gracious God may do just that. But often the good He is working toward is eternal good, is spiritual good. Look at John 11:14 and 15: *"Lazarus is dead, and I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, so that you may believe."*

Remember, Jesus is talking to His disciples here. Mary and Martha have no knowledge of this, but imagine that you're them and Jesus has just told you that He is glad Lazarus is dead. Talk about a friendship that would need fixing. But the *why* is so important. "I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, *so that you may believe.*" Now think of your situation. Like Mary and Martha, you're left hanging and have no knowledge of what is going on behind the scenes. But suppose Jesus said I am glad you're struggling with anxiety and depression; I'm glad you're being bullied; I'm glad you're watching all your friends get married and have children and you're still single or unable to conceive. I'm glad your nephew has Down Syndrome. That might be enough to make you doubt the goodness of God. But suppose He told you the reason He was glad: so that others might believe. I don't know that it's the case—remember, this isn't a math formula—but you may be going through what you're going so that others might come to trust in Jesus Christ as their Savior, or might grow in their faith, in some way we cannot now or might never see, but that God does. That doesn't make the pain go away, but it shows us how God might be working, and if we are in line with Him, that working is for our good—just not in the way we might think.

You see, if we're truly having the mindset God wants us to have, we should always be thinking about His glory. You're a high school athlete who just won State! How can God be glorified in this? You just got a promotion at work—better pay and a closer parking space! How might God be glorified by that? The prettiest girl in the whole school just said yes when you asked her to go out with you! How can God be glorified? That's not natural—we have to train ourselves to think that way. *I* have to train *myself* to think that way. But it works the other way too. You just found out you didn't make the team. You were passed over for the promotion, and they want to move you to a less-desirable shift. The prettiest girl and all her popular friends want nothing to do with a "nerd" like you (their words, not mine). How can God be glorified? The truth is, we don't always know. But we do know that God is working for our good—a good that may include tangible benefits, that may include His fixing the problem as He did for Job. But it might also be a good that is realized when we put our desires and attitudes in tune with His, a good that might not be realized until we stand in glory before him . . . and next to someone who's life was impacted by His working in our trials and tribulations.

God loves us. God knows the outcome. Our third observation is that God is working for His glory.

And now the scene changes. Now Jesus arrives in Bethany. And we see Him interact with both Martha and Mary. At first glance, we seem to see equal responses from the sisters. Martha comes out to greet Jesus and says in verse 21, "Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died." A little while later, in verse 32, when Mary comes out to the place where Jesus was, she says the same thing, "Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died." Unfortunately, we're not told what tone either of them used. Mary fell at Jesus' feet as she said it. Because she was absolutely gutted? Was she gasping and sobbing as she said it. Did Martha scream it, "Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died!!!" Guilty confession, I've yelled at God before. But we don't know how they said it; Scripture doesn't overtly tell us. So we have to play detective a little bit, to examine these two similar statements.

To do that, we're going to look at Jesus' responses to these two women. And we're going to start with His response to Mary. In verse 32, she says, "Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died." In verse 33 we read, *When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her also weeping, He was deeply moved in spirit and was troubled.* Then we read in the next couple verses that they took Jesus to the tomb and Jesus wept. And we might gloss over these few verses and think that Jesus was simply moved to tears, and who wouldn't be? But ask yourself the question, why is Jesus sad? He knows—and spoiler alert for those of you who haven't read the story—that in five minutes, Lazarus is going to walk out of that tomb alive. Martha and Mary and their friends are going to experience the greatest joy of their life. I wouldn't be weeping; I'd be holding back a smirk. "Just wait until you see what I'm about to do!" Why is Jesus weeping?

Could it be that Jesus is a sympathetic crier? We're supposed to "Rejoice with those who rejoice; weep with those who weep." Martha and Mary are weeping, so Jesus is weeping with them? I suppose that could play a part of it. Is He sad because death is in the world and causes so many people pain? Maybe. But if we look back at verse 33 to that phrase "deeply moved in spirit," and if we take a moment to look at the original Greek, we see there's a lot more going on with Jesus' emotions and His response. That phrase "deeply moved in spirit" is translated from the Greek *embrimaomai* which means to have indignation or to blame. HELPS Word-Studies says that it means "to snort like an angry horse" or to snort or roar with rage. According to Strong's Concordance it "expresses strong indignation . . . [a] deep feeling that is moved to sternly admonish." And the word "troubled" right after it carries with it a connotation of being agitated. This is not the somber, long-faced Jesus we see in pictures. Jesus is not merely sad—He is *embrimaomai*!

We see this Greek word *embrimaomai* used five times in the New Testament. Once here, once each in Matthew 9 and Mark 1 where Jesus healed people and sternly warned them not to tell what He had done, once in Mark 14 where the woman who anointed Jesus was rebuked by some of the disciples for what they saw as wasting the perfume, and once again in John 11, five verses down in verse 38. "So Jesus, again being deeply moved within [*embrimaomai*] came to the tomb." Why is Jesus indignant?

Look back at verse 37. *But some of them said, "Could not this man, who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man also from dying?"* And look at Mary in verse 32: "If You had been here, my brother would not have died" period, end of statement. And now contrast that with Martha, back in verse 21, "If You had been here, my brother would not

have died. *Even now* I know that whatever You ask of God, God will give You.” The original Greek has a “but” there, “but even now.” That’s a word of contrast that gives us insight into Martha’s perspective.

Look at Jesus’ response to her in verse 23, “*Your brother will rise again.*” *Martha said to Him, “I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.” Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies; and everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die. Do you believe this?” She said to Him, “Yes, Lord; I have believed that you are the Christ, the Son of God, even He who comes into the world.”*

That phrase “I have believed” is in the perfect tense, which is used to describe an action completed in the past but with continuing results to present time. Martha, despite her sorrow, her brokenness, despite questioning why Jesus hadn’t responded differently, still exercised faith. She saw Jesus as the long-awaited Messiah, the Christ, the Son of God. She believed that He was the resurrection and the life, and that because of that Lazarus would rise again to eternal life one day. But she didn’t stop there. *Even now*, with Lazarus dead, it was not too late for the Son of God to work.

Mary’s expression of faith stopped at what Jesus *could* have done. The mourners who were with her believed in Jesus to a limited capacity—He could heal sick people, but once they died, it was all over.

Now hold on a second, you say. Is Jesus really snorting mad, is he agitated, is he weeping because they don’t expect Lazarus to come back from the dead? That does seem a little harsh. I’ve been to a lot of funerals and I’ve never once gone with the expectation that halfway through the service, the deceased would sit up in the casket and then join us for refreshments in the foyer. Is God angry with me for that lack of faith? I don’t think so, because I think the issue here is not that Mary and her fellow mourners doubted that Jesus *would* raise Lazarus from the dead, but that they doubted that He even *could* raise Lazarus from the dead. And thus they had lost hope.

So now we look to our suffering, to our issues, to our moments when it seems God has left us hanging. And I pose the question to you—and I pose it right back to myself—have we lost hope because we believe in a limited-capacity Jesus? We have a problem, and we ask God for a fix according to certain parameters—let it not be cancer, let the mandate not cost me my job, let so-and-so not win this election—because if God doesn’t fix it according to those parameters, we’ll be sunk. And if it is cancer, if I do lose my job, if they do get elected, if Lazarus dies—there’s nothing anyone can do. If this hits a little close to home, you’re in good company. I’m too often guilty of this sort of thinking. But friends, we serve a God who is the God of there’s nothing anyone can do.

I don’t like a lot of contemporary Christian music, but I am a fan of Lauren Daigle. Something in her voice, in the style of her music, hits a frequency that appeals to my ears. More than that, many of her lyrics hit the right frequency too. Take for example a song off the album *Look Up Child*:

*In the darkest hour, when I cannot breathe
Fear is on my chest, the weight of the world on me
Everything is crashing down, everything I had known
When I wonder if I’m all alone
I remember, I remember
You have always been faithful to me
I remember, I remember
Even when my own eyes could not see
You were there, always there*

What’s so great about this song is that it is evocative of something we see throughout Scripture, where God says to the Israelites, remember how I delivered you from Egypt, remember how I led you through the Red Sea on dry ground, remember how I provided manna in the wilderness, remember how I brought you into the Promised Land, remember how I delivered you from enemies time and time and time again. Remember, remember, remember. And God doesn’t call them to remembrance so that they can sit around the campfire smiling and laughing about the good old days. He does it to evoke faith in them for the current moment. Remember *all* that I have done and have faith in Me again.

Now, I've never walked through a parted body of water, had my supper fall from the sky, or seen a foreign army defeated by the mere stamping of feet or blowing of trumpets. But I've read about such feats. And the same God who called the Israelites to remember is the God we pray to in our "darkest hour" when "everything is crashing down." He's also the same God who has, on many, many occasions, indeed answered our prayers and fixed our problems. God doesn't work in formulas, as I said, but He is the same; His character never waivers.

God loves us. God knows the outcome. God is working for His glory. And our fourth observation is that God calls us to faith and is worthy of that faith. Again, I'm not suggesting we should beat up Mary and the mourners, nor am I trying to put in your mind a picture of an angry God snorting from heaven against you. Rather, I'm hoping to point you—and me—to the picture of Martha, who saw Jesus for all He was, and who had faith that saw to eternity, but that also gave her hope in the here and now.

*I will lift my eyes even in the pain
Above all the lies, I know You can make a way
I have seen giants fall, I have seen mountains move
I have seen waters part because of You
I remember, I remember
You have always been faithful to me
I remember, I remember*

We've examined Mary and Martha's experience and drawn observations that can help us in those moments when it seems God has left us hanging. But there's one problem: Lazarus is still dead as a doornail. God has not fixed Mary and Martha's problem. But, as Paul Harvey would say, "Now, the rest of the story."

Verse 39:

Jesus said, "Remove the stone."

Martha, the sister of the deceased, said to Him, "Lord, by this time there will be a stench, for he has been dead four days."

Jesus said to her, "Did I not say to you that if you believe, you will see the glory of God?"

So they removed the stone. Then Jesus raised His eyes, and said, "Father, I thank You that You have heard Me. I knew that You always hear Me; but because of the people standing around I said it, so that they may believe that You sent Me."

When He had said these things, He cried out with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth."

The man who had died came forth, bound hand and foot with wrappings, and his face was wrapped around with a cloth.

Jesus said to them, "Unbind him, and let him go."

Our fifth and final observation is that when God has left you hanging, He will not *leave* you hanging. Mary and Martha had to wait four days for Jesus to come and fix their problem. You may have to wait longer—it might be four weeks, four months, four years, four decades! It might even be *for* the rest of your life here on earth. And I get it, some of you might be feeling like you've just listened to a Timeshare presentation and the other shoe has dropped (We owe *how* much?!?!) Saying that God will fix your problem by taking you to heaven seems like something of a cop-out, right? I would love to tell you that God is going to fix everything in four days, or at the very least that He will make it all better here on earth. You'll never have another bout with depression, you'll never have a bill due before the next paycheck, you'll never be the last one picked or the one left out again. But I can't do that, because the ultimate hope of the Christian faith is not rooted here on earth. The ultimate hope of the Christian faith is rooted in eternity, and it is rooted in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

The good news of the gospel—in fact the only thing that makes the gospel good at all—is that Jesus was nailed to a Roman cross, not as punishment for His sins like every other person crucified, but for ours. And Scripture tells us that as darkness came over the land in the middle of the day, as God turned away as His holy wrath was poured out upon the sinless Lamb, Jesus cried out "*My God, my God, why have You forsaken Me!*" We might paraphrase, "God, why have you left me hanging!"

And if it stops there, if Jesus was truly *left* hanging on that cross—or, more accurately, left in the tomb after He died—if God never came and “fixed” the problem, we are, as Paul wrote, “of all men most to be pitied.” We’re living in a fairy tale. “If Christ has not been raised, then [my] preaching is vain, your faith also is in vain.”

But it *doesn't* stop there, as we just celebrated a few weeks ago. Jesus knew the answer to His question—He was left hanging on the cross to finish the payment for our sins. But God didn't leave Him hanging, nor did He let His body see decay in the grave. Rather, God raised Jesus from the dead. He walked out of that tomb alive, and He lives forevermore. And because of that—and *only* because of that—we have hope. But there is a caveat. The Bible tells us that *God so loved the world that, He gave His only begotten son*—that is, He left Jesus hanging, forsaken, on a cross—*that whoever believes in him shall not perish, but have eternal life*. You see, if we believe that we're good enough or better than the guy or gal next to us, or believe that because we were baptized in a church or belong to a church we're okay, or believe that a loving God would never send someone to hell—none of which are biblical ideas, by the way—if we believe any of those things, we're essentially telling Jesus that He died for nothing. But if we look honestly at our hearts and admit that we are sinners, that we fall short of God's perfect standard, and believe and trust that Jesus paid for our sins on the cross, the Bible says we have the hope of eternal life. Not a wishful thinking, but a confident expectation, an assurance.

The book of Revelation tells about that hope, that eternal life: *And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, “Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them, and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away.”*

No more death. No more cancer. No more sickness. No more feuds. No more betrayals. No more broken relationships. No more debt. No more financial struggles. No more bullies. No more politics. No more problems of any kind. No more curse. Just perfect happiness and union with God for all of eternity.

Jesus said to Martha in the midst of her grieving, *“I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies; and everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die.”* Then he asked her, *“Do you believe this?”* Church, in the midst of *your* grief, *your* hurt, *your* struggles, when God has left you hanging, do you believe this? Nathan, when your nephew is in the NICU and you're waiting on a diagnosis, do you believe this? Then rest assured as you remember.

Friends, I hope and pray that God will do for you what He did for Mary and Martha, that He will bring your “Lazarus” back in this life—that He'll heal, fix, provide in the here and now. But if He doesn't, remember that He loves you, that He knows the outcome, that He is working for His glory, that He is worthy of faith. And remember and rest assured that God will not *leave* you hanging because He left His Son hanging on the cross in your and my place but also because He didn't *leave* Him hanging, but raised him from the dead.