



JUST WHAT
THE DOCTOR
Prescribed!
John 11:28-37 NIV
A SERMON BY
MINISTER BARBARA FLORVIL

Sunday, October 27, 2019

Preacher: Min. Barbara Florvil

Sermon Title: Just What the Doctor
Prescribed

Scripture: John 11:28-37



**CURRICULUM
GUIDE**



Sermon Summary

Using the story of Lazarus' death and Mary's interaction with Jesus in John 11:28-37, Min. Barbara Florvil explores how we can navigate the feeling of disconnect between the promises of God that we hear and the tragedies of life that we experience. Min. Florvil uses the illustration of medicinal commercials that often present a disconnect between the life someone appears to be living as a result of taking the medicine and the side effects that they encounter to show how we have to examine the disconnects in our Christian experience.

Min. Florvil offers up ways that we can appropriately frame our grief and that even when we're struggling with God not coming through in ways that we hoped, God cares. Nothing can separate us from the love of God and that is just what the doctor prescribed.

Notes for Facilitators:

We've come to the point in the season where it's time for you to identify new facilitators and hosts who can serve during the Winter 2020 season of Village. Training takes place on Saturday, November 23rd at ASBC. Please begin to speak with individuals who have shown gifts for either role during this season. In addition to speaking with them, we also encourage you to send those names to the Village Team.

Getting To Know You Questions:

1. What are the most common Christian clichés that you hear people offer to others in their time of grief? What would be a more helpful way to show empathy and support?
2. Under what circumstances have you doubted the power of God?



Into The Bible Questions:

1. In John 11, what are the differences in Martha's (verse 21), Mary's (verse 32), and the crowd's (verse 37) approach when they all consider that things could have been different had Jesus been present? How does Jesus' response differ in each instance?
2. In John 11:20, Martha heard that Jesus was coming and went out to meet Him but Mary stayed home. In John 11:28-29, Martha told Mary that Jesus was asking for her and Mary got up quickly to go see Jesus. Why do you think Mary went quickly the second time but didn't leave with Martha the first time?
3. In relation to the sermon, what does Romans 8:35-39 mean to you?

Life Application Questions:

1. Min. Florvil talked about the cognitive dissonance between what we know about God and what is happening in our life. When in your life have you known something to be true about God, but had an experience that made it hard to believe?
2. Min. Florvil taught us that "pain gives us boldness." She also remarked that we have made our suffering a "glorious enterprise." What did this sermon make you think about your understanding of pain and suffering?
3. Even while going through pain, Mary fell at Jesus' feet while expressing her authentic disappointment with Him for His delayed arrival. Do you feel like you can balance anger with God and reverence for who God is? What are the things that you consider when evaluating your approach to God?
4. Min. Florvil emphasizes the verse "Jesus wept" as a reminder that we serve a God who feels. What feeling does this reminder give you permission to have? What emotions have you tried to hide but could use some room to express?



"Can I Push It?"

Min. Florvil argued that we can't get on the other side of grief until we learn how to feel. This can be particularly true for marginalized communities because of the history of how the Bible has been used by majority groups as a way to enforce silence. Yet, in John 11:28-37, Jesus gives us the freedom to express authentic emotions. What are some church traditions and practices that are barriers to healing? How do you work through this?

Spirit Work:

In John 11:34, Jesus asks Mary "where have you laid him?" Min. Florvil invited us to ask ourselves the question, "where have you laid your hurts?" Schedule time with yourself this week for a moment of honest contemplation. In that time, consider what hurts or disappointments you may be hiding from God. In prayer, challenge yourself to show God where you have laid those things, and think about at least one way you could make room for healing.



Activity:

Min. Florvil defined victory as having God by our side. Talk to another village member about how you have defined victory in the past. Then share a victory from your past and a victory you are praying for in the future. Commit to praying for one another for your future victories through the rest of this village season.

Additional Question for Married Couples Villages:

Mary not only had a relationship with Jesus as her Savior but also as her friend. Even as she was hurt and disappointed that Jesus didn't show up, there was still an approach of respect when voicing her feelings. When Mary voiced her pain, Jesus felt pain as well. When voicing disappointment with your spouse for not showing up in the way that you expect, what are some lines that you stay within to ensure that it is done with respect? If you are the spouse who is hearing the disappointment of the other, how does Jesus' response provide an example of how to empathize with your spouse?

Additional Question for Young Adult Villages:

Have you ever felt like you've been left on "read" by God? How do you continue when you know that God has heard you but either hasn't given you an answer or hasn't come through in the way that you wanted?

Additional Questions for Parents' Villages:

Min. Florvil referenced the "side effects of life." How are you preparing your children to handle the disappointments of life?

- a. What are the most urgent conversations?
- b. Which conversations will be the most difficult?
- c. Do you have any advice for other parents on talking with children about the difficulties of life?

Additional Questions for Women Villages:

Min. Florvil stated that the glorification of struggle has been especially problematic for black women because they have shouldered burdens out of necessity. It has become an expectation for black women to take on an excessive amount of responsibility and to deal with marginalization as a given. Have you been affected by the unrealistic expectations of being a superwoman? If so, how do you combat normalizing suffering as a woman and finding a path for healing?