

## John 11:1-44

### COVID19 – For the Glory of God

#### Introduction

I have to begin this morning with a confession...

It's a confession I really don't want to make in public – because it involves the Simpsons...

There **is a particular scene** in an episode of the Simpsons...where Homer Simpson (the father of the show) is in serious trouble for his life...

He's about to die – and as he looks up to heaven **he begins to pray** this interesting prayer – he says:

*“I'm not normally a praying man, but if you're up there please save me...Superman...”*

Now besides me having to repent for using the Simpsons as an opening illustration...

The reality is that **many of us have felt like Homer Simpson** at certain points in our life...

If we're honest – many of our prayers have been Homer Simpson prayers for God to act in miraculous ways that **are only akin to a Superhero** coming down to save the day...

#### This is the sense

And here's the part that I **don't want to admit** – there are times **in my own life** when I feel **so helpless & so overwhelmed** with grief & sorrow **that I wish God** were like Superman coming down to save the day...

This is certainly the sense we get when we discover a relative contracting malignant bone cancer...

This is certainly the sense we get when we turn on the news to discover a drunk driver killing 4 children riding their bikes in the streets of Parramatta...

Or when a husband burns his wife & 3 children alive in the back of a car in the streets of Camp Hill...

**And this is certainly the sense we get** when we open up our feed and see the devastating effects of COVID19!

God if you re up there – why are you NOT doing anything...

God if you re up there why are you NOT acting like Superman...

Many prayers that have been prayed in my own heart **have been** Homer Simpson prayers...

### **Mary & Martha**

And what's interesting, is that **as we come** to this passage in John chapter 11 – **this is the exact same question** we see penetrating the hearts of Mary & Martha in the Ancient town of Bethany:

*God if you had just been here my brother would NOT have died!*

Life is brutal...

And when the **brutality of sin & the brutality of suffering penetrates your life, where will you turn** in times of trouble?!?!?

Where will you turn in times of need?!?!?

### **Main Point**

Well this morning as we come to John Chapter 11 – this question is **going to be answered in the account** of Mary & Martha coming to Jesus...

And so the main point we're going to see here this morning is this:

*In a time of pandemic panic, (I want you to) remember this truth:*

*Jesus loves you & He knows what He's doing*

And we're gonna see this in 3 ways:

A **sustaining** love

A **stunning** glory

A **surprising** delay

## **John 11**

John chapter 11 beginning at verse 1:

*Now a man was sick, Lazarus from Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. <sup>2</sup> Mary was the one who anointed the Lord with perfume and wiped His feet with her hair, and it was her brother Lazarus who was sick. <sup>3</sup> So the sisters sent a message to Him: "Lord, the one you love is sick."*

*When Jesus heard it, He said, "This sickness will not end in death but is **for the glory of God**, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it." <sup>5</sup> Now Jesus loved Martha, her sister, and Lazarus. <sup>6</sup> **So** when He heard that he was sick, He stayed two more days in the place where He was...*

In the words of D.A. Carson:

*All too often... God surprises us...*

When you open up your bibles **and you come to the Scriptures**; you're going to find a God full of – **Sovereign** – **Stunning** – **Spectacular** – all encompassing **Surprises!**

This was **certainly the case** when it came **to the life** of the Apostle Paul (for instance) – as a young man **he was studying** the Judaic law system & persecuting freshly formed Christian Churches – **no one could have ever anticipated** that God would turn his life around on the Damascus Road & make him a **disciple & sufferer** of the Lord Jesus Christ!

Or what about Peter – taunting & boasting his courage & tenacity to go to death **for the glory of God** – **only to deny** His very Lord & Saviour the moment his faith was tested by a young Jewish girl around a fire!

Or what about Mary (the mother of Jesus) – as a young Jewish virgin, **no doubt** her hopes **were to be marrying** the man of her dreams (& to live a normal Jewish life) – **until all of a sudden God surprised her with a child** – an angel of the Lord shows up & **says to her** that **she will be pregnant with a child** who is God Himself!

See **all too often friends...** *God surprises us!*

### **Surprise #1 – The Sustaining Love of Christ**

And so is it **any wonder that when we come** to John chapter 11 –we come to a passage full of – Sovereign – Stunning – Spectacular – all encompassing Surprises!

Well surprise #1 and what we will call *the sustaining love of Christ!*

Have a look at verse 1:

*Now a man was sick, Lazarus from Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. Mary was the one who anointed the Lord with perfume and wiped His feet with her hair...*

### **Jesus loved this family**

So what's interesting about verse 2 here, **is that this event** (this anointing of the feet of Jesus) **hasn't even happened yet...**

This event **doesn't take place** until Chapter 12 verse 3 where John will say:

*“Then Mary took a pound of perfume, pure and expensive nard, anointed Jesus's feet, and wiped **His feet** with **her hair**...”*

And so what is John trying to communicate **by telling us about an event** – **before that event actually takes place** in chapter 12?!?!?

And **the point of this** is that:

By **drawing our attention** to this event **BEFORE this event takes place** – John is informing us about the **unique relationship** that exists between Jesus & this family!

You **don't** anoint the feet of a person that **you just met!**

You **don't** anoint the feet of a stranger that **you hardly know!**

**You do this** for someone **you love!**

That's the point John is making!

Jesus loved this family – & this family certainly loved Him!

### **Love Repeated**

And this is something that **John underscores again & again** throughout the text – Verse 3:

*So the sisters sent a message to Him: "Lord, the one you **love**...is sick!*

Verse 5:

*Now Jesus **loved**...Martha, her sister, and Lazarus.*

Verse 36:

*So the Jews said to themselves, "See how He **loved** Him – (Lazarus!)"*

So John tells us **without any equivocation** – without any confusion:

*Jesus **loves** this family!*

*He **adores** this family!*

*He **cares deeply** for this family!*

And the reason why that's so important to see, is because **this is the picture that exists** between every redeemed sinner & God Himself!

### **Not Our Love for Jesus!**

This family is **a picture of the relationship that exists between every redeemed sinner & Jesus Christ!**

If you are **in Christ** here this morning (if you are trusting in the saving work of God) – **you are to mark yourself off** as:

#### *One Whom Jesus Loves!*

And **the reason why** I'm **emphasizing** this point – is because **that is the basis** (that is the appeal) in which these sisters go to Jesus **and ask for the healing** of their brother!

See I want you to notice that **these sisters DID NOT appeal to Jesus** on the basis of **their love for Him** – but rather on the basis of **His love for them!**

Right this is **NOT**:

*The one who loves Jesus – has the most faith in Jesus – the one who honours Jesus...*

*but it is*

*The One whom Jesus loves!*

See it is **NOT our love for Jesus** and how much **we can adore Him**– **it is Jesus' love for us** and how much **He cares** in our greatest time of need!

**That makes all the difference** when it comes to **our suffering** – & **our trials** – & **our pain** in this world!

Friends:

Do you want **your eternal joy – your eternal state – your eternal happiness to be based upon** the love you have for Jesus – or the love that Jesus has for you?!?!

Upon your ability **for Jesus** – or upon Jesus' ability **for you**?!?!

Jesus loved Lazarus – He loved Mary – He loved Martha... and that made all the difference in their greatest time of need:

*Jesus; the One whom **you love** is sick!*

### **Where are you turning?**

And so even in this (even in them coming to Jesus) – **we see something** of a **practical nature** in our walks with God (& our relationship with Christ) – friends:

In this **pandemic** – in this **time** – in this **trouble** – in this **suffering** – in this **season**:

Where are you turning to find **hope**?!?!

Where are you turning to find **joy**?!?!

Where are you turning **to fulfil your greatest need**?!?!

**Many professing Christians** (over the next several weeks) are **going to turn to the broken avenues** that **will not satisfy & will not quench** their broken thirst!

Many Christians are going to turn to:

Alcohol – Netflix – Pornography – Science – Humanity – medicine; in order to find their joy & their hope!

So many broken avenues of false-hope **that are going to take the hearts** of those in & outside of the Church!

And so **this is the time for us** as the Church – as the people of God **to be salt & light** – to be **holy & blameless** – to be **set-apart** for the glory of God – so that as 1<sup>st</sup> Peter chapter 2 will tell us:

*“But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for His own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who called you out of darkness, and into His marvellous light...”*

**Where will you turn** when you turn on the T.V – Where will you turn **when you open up** your news feed – where are you turning **in times of turbulent trials?!?!**

I trust & I pray **that it is with the One** who loves you!

Surprise number #1 and what we will call *the sustaining love of Christ in turbulent times...*

### **Glory through sickness**

Secondly – Surprise number #2 and what we will call:

*The stunning glory of God*

Have a look at verse 4:

*Now when Jesus heard this, He said, “This sickness will not end in death **but is for the glory of God**, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it.”*

So this was **NOT something that was unplanned** in the plan of Jesus – this is **NOT something** that took Him by surprise — He’s **not pacing** back & forth wondering what to do – He’s **not dropped** the ball – He’s **not fumbled** the pass...

But instead – this **sickness** – this **pain** – this **suffering** – **is found within** the exact **plan & foreknowledge** of God – **in order that God Himself** will be glorified through it!

This sickness (He says) **is for the glory of God** – so that the Son of God **may be glorified** through it!



I mean **does that bother anyone** here this morning?!?!

Does that make you **nervous** or **angry** that God would allow **suffering & evil** to take place because He has a **higher & grander** purpose in mind?!?!

See at first glance this seems like an odd thing for Jesus to say right – after all Lazarus **does die** and in fact 2 days later Jesus is the one **who tells His disciples** that he is dead – so how **then could He say** that Lazarus' illness **will not end** in death?!?!

How can He say that this sickness is for the glory of God?!?!

Well the answer is **found in the very verse** we just read:

*This sickness will NOT end in death...but it will go through death on the way...*

*It will NOT end in death – **but it must go through death** – through pain – through suffering – in order that the Son of God may be glorified through it..."*

Brothers & sisters – **sometimes God chooses to display His glory & grace by pinning it against the backdrop of [our] suffering & pain...**

### **Reasons for Suffering**

And **there are many reasons** why God does this – **many reasons why** He allows suffering to penetrate the lives of His people:

#### **Suffering points us toward the fall**

For instance (**one of the ways**) is that:

*Suffering is a great apologetic for the truth of the bible*

Suffering points us toward the fact **that the world is broken** – that Adam & eve really did fall – that sin is real – and the effects of sin have devastated the human race!

The bible tells us that what is true about them –**is true** about us!

See as Christians **we have a reason** for our suffering & pain – **we have a basis** on which to explain COVID19 & the effects it has on this world – see **no other worldview** can **justify** the suffering & pain we experience in the world!

And so suffering is one of the greatest apologetics (one of the greatest evidences) for the Christian faith!

Suffering & pain **are the result** of the Fall – and the Bible tells us that this is true!

*Suffering & sorrow are great apologetics for the truth of the bible...*

### **Suffering Demonstrates Authentic Faith**

Secondly:

*Suffering demonstrates that **you & I** have an authentic Christian faith*

In James chapter 1 – James the half brother of Jesus is writing to a group of suffering servants for Christ and he writes these words in the opening lines of his epistle:

*Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, **for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness.** And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.*

Now I don't know about you but rejoicing in my trials is NOT something that comes naturally to me! **I don't naturally look at my suffering** & count it all joy!

But James says that we do rejoice – **because those trials** are producing something steadfast & immovable!

In fact **Peter will say** in 1<sup>st</sup> Peter chapter 1:

*In this **you rejoice**, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, **so that the tested genuineness of your faith**—more precious than gold...may be found to result in praise and glory and honour at the revelation of Jesus Christ.*

So suffering now, points us toward a genuine faith **because of what that suffering will produce** in the child of God!

As Charles Spurgeon so wonderfully puts it:

*In order to have **great faith** – we must have **great trials!***

Trials & suffering authenticate our Christian faith & demonstrate for us that God produces steadfastness & hope!

Only a Christian faith can suffer with hope!

**Suffering exposes us to our idols**

Third:

*Suffering exposes us to the idols we hold so closely to our hearts*

2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians chapter 12 – **Paul** will describe for us **a thorn in his flesh** that God has sovereignly put in place, **in order that His power – His strength – His glory** might be revealed through that suffering!

*“So to keep me from becoming conceited (says Paul) – [to keep me from stumbling into sin] God has given me a thorn in the flesh, **a messenger from Satan** to harass me, in order to keep me from being puffed up...”*

So **God uses suffering** (says Paul) to **expose to us** the idols of our hearts – and **through that suffering** we may see more clearly **the sin of self-reliance** & the power & glory of God Himself!

See **if there is one thing** this virus has taught us – it’s that:

Life is fickle – humanity is weak – and **we are NOT** the gods we once thought we were!

And so God will bring to us **suffering & trials** to open our eyes – to **expose** what we **love**...so that He can recapture (**once again**) the affections of our hearts **and bring us to our knees**...

God loves us too much **to allow us to continue on** in our sin & rebellion!

*Suffering points us to the idols of our hearts!*

**Suffering points us toward heaven**

Lastly:

*Suffering points us toward our final home in heaven*

2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians chapter 4 Paul writes:

*“So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. **For this light momentary affliction** is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, as we look **not to the things that are seen** but to things that are unseen... For we know that if the tent **that is our earthly home is destroyed**, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens...”*

Friends suffering **indicates and shows us** that there is something more **that our souls are longing for** – Augustine said it best:

*God has made us for Himself – and our hearts are restless until they find rest in Him!*

And Paul says that **we are like pilgrims** on a great spiritual journey in the here & now...

That as Pilgrims living in the uncomfortable world of today – we live in tents & temporary locations **in order that** the **hardships & sufferings of this life** may prepare us for our **an eternal weight of glory & grace** when we die!

And so friends – **sometimes God chooses to display His glory & grace by pinning it against the backdrop of [our] suffering & pain** – **In order that we may see something of His character and His love for us in that event!**

And so the question becomes what did Christ want them to see by allowing Lazarus to get sick?!?!

What was the purpose in Christ allowing this death for the glory of God?!?!

What glory was being revealed in this tragic event?!?!

### **The surprising delay of the love of God**

Well I'm glad you asked because that leads us into our final surprise here today:

*The surprising delay of the love of God*

Have a look at verse 5:

*“Now Jesus loved Martha, her sister, and Lazarus – **So when He heard that Lazarus was sick, He stayed two more days in the place where He was...***

So John **restates what he's already stated** over & over again:

Jesus loved Martha – Jesus loved Mary – Jesus loved Lazarus... and **the way that He displays this sustaining love for them!** is by allowing His friend to die – & **for these sisters** to weep...

That's what the text says!

Jesus loved Martha, her sister, and Lazarus – **SO – or therefore:**

*When He heard that Lazarus was sick; **He waited 2 more days in the place where He was...***

The Greek word **John uses here** is *OUN* – it means... so or therefore! There is no trickery here in the Greek – what it says is what it is!

He connects **the love of Christ** in verse 5 – **to the delay of Christ** in verse 6...

**So that the display of His love would be demonstrated through the delay of His timing!**

That's what John tells us – **He intentionally allows Lazarus to die** – in order that He may express His **deepest love** for this family!

And so what is going on here?!?! – How is the delay of Christ **connected to** the display of His love?!?!

## **2 reasons for Delay**

Well there are **2 things that John is wanting us to see here** both equally surprising!

And **the first one** is this – that:

In the ancient world – they **didn't actually have** modern technology & equipment **like we have today!**

They **weren't as sophisticated** in their medical **technology** as we are **in the West today!**

They **didn't have** fancy monitors or pressure gauges to know **the optimal levels** of a person on their deathbed & how long they had to live... and so what would **sometimes happen** is that a person's heart would begin to slow down – their breathing would become incredibly dull – and **the person's pulse would** be almost non-existent...

And so **many people in the ancient world** were pronounced medically dead – **when in reality** – their heart was merely fibrillating...

In fact there were **reports** of people being carried out in their caskets, when all of a sudden, **you would hear** this knocking & scratching from the inside – because the body had resuscitated...

### **Hovering Spirit**

Now **this obviously led** to a number of different **theories & myths** about **what happens to a person** when they die...

And **one of those theories** was that when a person dies their soul would hover over their body **for the first three days** – until eventually **it would either** re-enter the person's body – or **it would depart** the moment decomposition would take place...

Now I'm not saying that Jesus bought into that myth – but He does know that others have bought into that myth back in His day...

That a person's spirit **would hover over their body for 3 days** intending to re-enter it!

And so **this is why** Jesus **actually waits** a further **2 days** – to make sure that it's **4 days** by the time that He gets there – **so that no one would believe** some Jewish myth that Lazarus' soul had re-entered his body on day 3!

He needed them to know that Lazarus was **really dead!**

He wanted them to believe that He **really did possess the power** of life & death and **in order for him to do that** – He needed to wait...

That's the first reason Jesus delays!

### **Higher & Grander**

But secondly **& more importantly** friends – there is **a greater lesson for us** to learn – there is a **greater reason** for this delay:

Sometimes... in our suffering....**We will be more blessed by seeing His glory & grace, than by being spared the suffering of our immediate pain!**

Jesus knows **that** – if we can love Him more – trust Him more – believe Him more – see Him more – adore Him more – then we will be **more blessed** by seeing His glory & grace; **than by being spared** the suffering of **our immediate discomfort & pain!**

Verse 15 – Jesus said to His disciples:

*I am glad for you that I was not there:*

*So that you may **believe!***

Verse 25:

*Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. The one who **believes** in me, even if he dies, will live.*

Verse 42:

*Father I say these things – so that those who are standing here may **believe** that you sent me...*

Friends – There is a **greater purpose** – there is a **greater goal** –there is a **greater love** God has toward us...in **His delay**...

And sometimes it takes the death of a friend, to see that!

Sometimes it takes the suffering of cancer for us to see the glory of God!

Sometimes **it takes a global pandemic** of spectacular worth – for people to see the reality of sin!

So often God displays His love for us... by delay!



### **Isaiah – Milk**

It is the child...who **always lives in the immediate now** – that **cannot understand** the concept of **a parents love by delay...**

When Isaiah **was first born** – the **only way he knew** how to wake up from sleep – was **going from 0 to 100 in seconds!!!**

He would wake up **screaming & wailing** at the top of his lungs because **he wanted us to know** that he was hungry – **and he was hungry now!!!**

**Now now I want it now he would scream!!!**

He was **thirsty** & he was **hungry** – & he wanted **immediate relief** from his suffering & pain **of hunger...**

Now...**he couldn't know** – how could he – He was an infant?!?!)

He **couldn't know** that the milk we had in our hands was **often too hot & too dangerous** for his little tummy to ingest – if I had just **given him the bottle** – he **would have** burnt his little tongue & been in more suffering & more pain!!!

And So **in order** for me to **display my love for him...I would delay...**

I would delay his immediate request – **to maximize his joy!**

So often God displays His love for us... by delay!

### **Disciples on a Boat**

Or what about the disciples – on the sea of Galilee **in the middle of** a great storm – they yell out to God:

***Do you NOT care that we are perishing!***

*Do you NOT see that we are in danger!*

*Are you NOT going to do anything?!?!*

**NOW! NOW! I want it now!**

**We want our blessings from God**

And **that is so often the way**...that we demand things from God...

And sometimes **the most loving thing He can do for us... is delay** – for **our good** & for **His glory!**

**Concluding remarks**

I don't know if you know this but there are **seven “I am”** statements in the Gospel of John...and there are **seven signs** in the Gospel **that point us** to a particular truth about the nature & character of Christ....

And if we go back to **the first sign** in the book – It was the miracle of **the wedding at Cana** in galilee – where Jesus turned water into wine...

And **it's there that you have** someone very close to Jesus (His own mother) – coming to him and saying:

*Lord we have a problem! We need some wine, and we need it now!*

And Jesus hears that request... and **the first thing** He does is nothing...He waits!

He **refuses to act on their immediate time** because **as He delays** – He knows that there is something so **much better** so **much bigger** is about to take place!

He says:

*I'm gonna bring you **the best wine** you've ever tasted – **the best wine** you've ever had!*

It was incredible!

And **that was the first sign** in the Gospel of John...

And now we're here in chapter 11 – & **it's the last sign** in the Gospel of John – and what do we see happening here in these verses?!?!

Someone very close to Jesus is coming to Him and they say:

*Lord we have a problem – Lazarus needs healing, and **he needs it now!***

And **Jesus hears that request** and (again) He refuses to act **on their time** – because **He knows** something **bigger**; something **so much better** is about to take place!

And that was **the display** – & **the power** – & **the glory** – and **the love** of the Son of **God** in raising Lazarus from the dead!

**Always motivated by love**

Friends – in your life – in my life – just as it was in Mary and Martha's life:

**WE MUST BELIEVE!**

That whenever Jesus delays:

**It is always motivated by love!**

One of my favourite quotes by Charles Spurgeon is the one where he's in the midst of great suffering & pain – and he says to his people:

*God is too good to be unkind. He is too wise to be confused. **If I cannot trace His hand, I can always trust His heart...***

If you are a child of God here this morning – mark it down in your bibles:

*Jesus loves you! And He knows what He's doing!*

### **God knows better**

There is a **greater hope** – there is a **greater purpose** – there is a **greater display** – there is a **greater story to COVID19 friends!**

And **sometimes it takes** the suffering & pain of a **global pandemic for us to wake up** & see the glory of God – DO NOT WAIST COVID19 friends!

Do NOT let this pandemic go to waist – there are souls at stake in this!

There are lives at stake in this!

What will you do with COVID19?!?!?

What will you do **with the glory of God** in COVID19?!?!?

What will you do with the **spectacular** – **sovereign** – **stunning** – all encompassing delay of the love of God in COVID19?!?!?

### **Conclusion**

In the words of D.A. Carson friends:

*All too often, God surprises us*

And this passage in John 11 is a passage:

***Full of sovereign surprises!***

And **what you will find** friends – is that **as you march into the midst of turbulent times** in the coming weeks & **even years of your life** – it is always **Jesus' love for you** – **NOT your love for Him** that will sustain your soul!

And **that makes all the difference** in our pain when trials come!

This sickness – this COVID19 **WILL END IN DEATH** – it already has...

But as we see saw in our passage here today:

*God is **too good** to be unkind. He is **too wise** to be confused...**If we cannot trace His hand, we can always trust His heart...***

Brothers & sisters:

*In a time of pandemic panic – **always remember** these 2 truths:*

*Jesus loves you – and **He knows what He's doing** in COVID 19...*

Let's pray.

## John 11:1-7

### Discussion Questions

**Main Point:** *In a time of pandemic panic, remember this truth: Jesus loves you & He knows what He's doing...*

**Q1.** The bible is sometimes full of surprises by God, can you think of any you have read lately? – Why are we so often caught off guard by God's purposes & plans? – What does this teach us about the wisdom & counsel of God? – What does this teach us about the wisdom & counsel of ourselves?

**Q2.** [Read John 11:1-3]. What is the basis these sisters appeal to when they send a message to Jesus? – [Scan through the entire chapter of John 11]. How often is Jesus' love for Mary, Martha, or Lazarus mentioned? – Why does John mention Jesus' love so often in this chapter? – Why is Jesus' love for us important to remember in our greatest time of need?

**Q3.** If Lazarus died, what did Jesus mean when he said “*this sickness will not end in death?*” – What glory was being revealed in the death & resurrection of Lazarus? – Are there any other passages in the bible that reveal God's glory through suffering? [See Genesis 50:15-20; Romans 5:3-5; Romans 8:18-23; 2 Corinthians 4:17; 2 Corinthians 12:6-10; 1 Peter 1:6-7; 1 Peter 4:12-16; 5:10].

**Q4.** [Read James 1:2-4; John 11:4]. What are some biblical reasons that God allows suffering & pain to penetrate the lives of His people? – How does suffering & pain encourage you to **trust** God more? – How does suffering

encourage you to **praise** God more? – How does suffering encourage you to **love** God more?

**Q5.** Where does the world naturally turn in times of suffering & pain? – How are these places broken wells of pleasure? – Where should people turn in times of need?

**Q6.** Has God ever delayed in answering your prayers? – What was produced in you as a result? – Why do we want our prayers answered immediately by God? – Why does God sometimes delay in answering our prayers?

**Q7. [Read verses 5-6].** How was it love for Jesus to delay His timing & allow Lazarus to die? – Can you think of a time in your life when you suffered loss, but then looked back & saw God's love in that loss? – Can you think of a time in your life when God delayed & you could see the positive effects of that?

**Q8.** What can we do to remind ourselves of God's love & sovereignty in the midst of suffering?

### **Application Questions**

**Q1.** What places do you turn to in Scripture to find hope in the midst of pain? – What is it about these Scriptures that bring you hope?

**Q2.** How has COVID19 affected you personally? – What are some things that God is teaching you through this pandemic? – Do you believe that God works all things – including death, disease, & disaster – together for your good and His glory? – Where do you go when you have doubts about this?

**Q3.** How do you answer those who ask – where is God in this pandemic? –  
How can we as a Church use COVID19 to speak to our friends about God? –  
How can we as a Church be salt & light in our Church & in our community?

**Q4.** How does meditating on God & His love for us help you in your greatest times of need?

**Q5.** What are some positive things you have seen come out of this pandemic?

**Q6.** Who are you talking to in order to share your concerns through this time?

**Q7.** How can we be praying for you in the coming weeks? – How can we be helping you practically?