Two Loving Preparations for the Raising of Lazarus (John 11:1-16)

1. Jesus prepares Mary and Martha for His impending sign (vv.1-6)
   1. He prepares them in response to their appeal (vv.1-3)
      1. This request differs greatly from the request of so many in this Gospel (cf. 4:49)
      2. They make their appeal grounded in their confident assurance of Christ’s love for them (cf. Rom. 8:32)

*“We ought also to observe that, from Christ’s love, they are led to entertain a confident hope of obtaining assistance, he whom thou lovest; and this is the invariable rule of praying aright; for, where the love of God is, there deliverance is certain and at hand, because God cannot forsake him whom he loveth.” (Calvin)*

* + 1. Their appeal is shaped by their confidence in His love.

*“They look to him for aid without specifying ways and means.”* (Morris)

* 1. He prepares them by His explanation of God’s purposes (v.4)
     1. The end goal of the illness is not death.
     2. The end goal of the illness is the glory of God in Christ.
        1. In the display of God’s character and power in the resurrection of Lazarus.
        2. In the crucifixion of the Son of God which will come as a result of this sign (cf. 11:45-53)
  2. He prepares them by His loving delay (vv.5-6)

*“We ought not to judge of the love of God from the condition which we see before our eyes. When we have prayed to him, he often delays his assistance, either that he may increase still more our ardour in prayer, or that he may exercise our patience, and, at the same time, accustom us to obedience. Let believers then implore the assistance of God, but let them also learn to suspend their desires, if he does not stretch out his hand for their assistance as soon as they may think that necessity requires; for, whatever may be his delay, he never sleeps, and never forgets his people.” (Calvin)*

1. Jesus prepares His disciples for His ominous return to Judea (vv.7-16)
   1. He is returning because of His devotion to do the works of His Father (vv.7-10)
   2. He is returning to raise Lazarus from the dead (vv.11-16)
      1. Jesus’ enigmatic saying—awaken the dead from sleep
      2. Jesus’ joyful purpose—the faith of His disciples
      3. Jesus’ settled resolve—his approaching death