

IN FOCUS: Where is God in our times of crisis?

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Martha and Mary both said to Jesus, “If you had been here, my brother would not have died” (John 11:21, 32). Have you ever been tempted to ask God where he was when we needed him?

I recently participated in a worship service at a [Baptist World Alliance](#) meeting where we received direct reports about the devastation of Haiti and Chile following the destructive earthquakes. Also a Nigerian messenger told of 500 people who recently were killed in violence in his country, many of whom were targets because of their Christian faith.

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Have you asked: “Lord, where were you when my husband died?” “Where were you when I got cancer?” “Lord, where were you when I lost my job?” We join the prophet Habakkuk in asking: “If God has the power to intervene, why doesn’t he?” This leads one to ask: “Can we trust a God who uses power selectively?”

Even the skeptics of Jesus’ day asked, “Could not this man, who opened the eyes of the blind man, have kept this man (Lazarus) also from dying?” (John 11:37)

Even though we may have unresolved questions that arise from God’s sovereignty and God’s benevolence, we still can make some observations from John 11:

- ***God is aware of our situation.*** Jesus indicates in verse 3 that Lazarus’ illness was no surprise to God. Jesus reminds us God even knows when a sparrow falls to the ground. He knows all that is

happening in your life and relationships.

- **God has an eternal perspective.** *He knew the purpose for Lazarus' illness, which would lead to the glory of God (verse 4). God even uses our sorrow as a part of his kingdom work in our lives and in his larger mission.*

- **God is capable of intervening.** *Even though God answers some prayers with "no" or "later," we should still be bold in our asking. Miracles still occur. Martha knew that even though her brother was dead, Jesus still would receive what he asked from the Father (verse 22).*

- **Jesus is the resurrection and the life (verses 25, 44).** *Christ followers cannot lose. Jesus has conquered the grave and given eternal life to his children.*

- **Jesus sympathizes with us in our sorrow.** *Even though Jesus knew he would raise Lazarus, he still wept with Mary. Often our dearest time with Christ is in our suffering.*

- **God's work has kingdom consequences.** *Through this painful experience in the lives of Lazarus, Mary and Martha, many believed in Jesus (verse 45).*

We are days away from Resurrection Sunday 2010. For two years, we have been participating in a challenge to share the hope of Christ with everyone in our state. Many have responded. Yet some are not yet convinced, and others still have not heard. Can we still speak of God's hope while the world continues to see images from cities destroyed by natural disaster or violence? Absolutely! Our hope is secure in Jesus!

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