



# BelPres Church

## **The Glory of God**

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Those of you in the community center, those of you online, those of you here, thank you for joining us. You have come on a great day. We are celebrating 10 years of New Hope Revival, this wonderful East African community that is part of us here at Bell Press.

Pastor Alexis is going to preach in Kinyarwanda and Gloria is going to translate, which is a hard thing to do, by the way, and she does a really good job at it.

We are celebrating what God has done in the last 10 years. Pastor Alexis, I want to thank you for your vision—not just to go start some church, but that you had a vision that together we would be better than separate. Every immigrant church has to work through the same things around the immigrant generation while the kids are growing up in the United States. You saw a vision that together we can reach everyone. So, thank you.

New Hope has made us a better church in so many ways. You have taught us how to worship. You have taught us about the Holy Spirit. You have made us look more like our community, which is really important, but more importantly, you have made us in this church look more like heaven, where every tribe, tongue, and nation is going to be together. So, we better practice here, or we're going to be uncomfortable there. You have helped us do that.

You have also taught us how to say hallelujah correctly. So, that's important.

I'm going to pray and then Pastor Alexis and Gloria will come up.

Jesus, thank you for this wonderful gift of New Hope. Thank you that out of all the churches, you chose to do it here. And we know it's not because we're better or special; you're just gracious.

Lord, we are so grateful. As we look at your Word, open it to us, teach us from it, and help us to be more like you. In your name.

Amen.

Let's welcome Pastor Alexis and Gloria.

[Applause]

Over the past 10 years, after it had been about three weeks when I was coming here and Pastor Scott was giving a sermon, I was very joyful and I screamed, "Hallelujah!"

After service, I was in trouble for that.

When we were greeting each other in the lobby, two people came to me and asked me, "Are you okay?"

Another person came to me and asked, "Do you need help?"

When I got home, I asked my wife, "Do you think I am okay?"

That was the first image I gave to Bell Press, but God was also doing something mighty with that.

Hallelujah. Hallelujah. Now we can do hallelujah. Before we begin, we say hallelujah. Good job. That's great. May God bless you abundantly.

I want to ask you a question. Who of you here likes to sit in the middle seat when you're flying? You can raise your hands.

Wow. So that means none of you likes the middle seat. In the month of May, we had a trip with the worship team to Dallas.

I was supposed to have the window seat. But because I like the middle seat, I asked the person who was supposed to sit in the window seat to go in the middle. He was very happy.

The reason why I like doing this is because I like the opportunity to be in the middle so I can talk to both people.

Hallelujah. The person I gave the window seat to fell asleep. In other words, I was not happy he fell asleep because I wanted to talk to him. But the other lady who was sitting in the aisle seat and I talked the whole time. Hallelujah. Hallelujah. Hallelujah. Hallelujah. Let's all say that the glory belongs to God.

When I was talking to that lady on the plane, it was about two hours until we could land. They were collecting trash, and I had coffee. One of the things that Americans told me is to drink coffee. Now I'm very good at that.

When they were collecting trash, the lady who was sitting next to me—the one I had a very good conversation with—I had told her what I do here. I told her about the things that I do back in Africa helping people.

This woman was helped a lot by what I said. But when they were collecting trash, I thought I had finished my coffee. When I was about to hand it over, I spilled it on her.

You can imagine it. I know. I know that was bad. And she was wearing a white shirt.

I'm sorry. I looked at her and apologized. I said, "I'm sorry. Please forgive me." She ran to the bathroom.

When she returned, I was very scared. I wondered, "Am I going to talk again?" Before she took her seat again, I was still apologizing. I told her, "I hope our conversation is not going to be in vain."

She told me, "Worry not. These things happen so they can teach me to be patient." She told me not to worry. She still reassured me that if I come to Florida with my family, she can host me. Hallelujah.

God speaks to us in our daily lives. Wherever we walk, God is always speaking to us. We have to learn to see the glory of God at all times. The glory of God is everywhere that we are.

When you travel, think of it as an opportunity to talk to people so that God gets the glory. I know we all like to be comfortable. But the glory of God has to always be lifted.

We're going to talk about the story of Lazarus, where Martha and Mary called upon Jesus.

When we read in the book of John chapter 11, we're going to divide this chapter into four parts—four parts that show us where the glory of God is revealed.

Martha and Mary called upon Jesus. They told Him that the one He loved was sick. "The one that you love is very sick. Jesus, please come and rescue us."

In other words, Jesus loved Martha, Mary, and Lazarus. He had a very strong friendship with them.

But the way Jesus responded is very different from the way a friend might respond. The way we want to be responded to is not always the same way Jesus responds. Sometimes we always want immediate responses. But Jesus does not delay.

Hallelujah. That means when Jesus comes, He comes in His perfect timing.

In this story, Jesus says that He's going to stay for two more days where He was. Remember, the Bible says that He loved them a lot. Let's say that you call an ambulance, and they tell you they're not going to come for two days. How would you react?

The ambulance tells you they're not coming until two days later. We're in a generation that always wants things to be immediate. But Jesus responds in His own time.

Jesus stayed for two more days because the Word says that this sickness was not going to kill Lazarus. Tell someone sitting next to you, "That sickness is not to kill you. It is for the glory of God to be lifted." There are things that we go through so that the glory of God can be lifted. Even though Jesus might seem to delay, the very first point is this: The glory of God is always revealed even in difficult times.

When you're in situations that you don't understand, when you're in times where you don't see solutions, when you're confused, the glory of God is always there. When life seems very hard, the glory of God is always present. It might delay, but it will surely come to pass.

He might not answer the way you want Him to answer, but when God comes, He responds once and for all. Jesus responded to them and said, "This sickness is not unto death. It is for the glory of God to be lifted."

Hallelujah. The second point: God is always working even when we don't see it. Tell someone sitting next to you, "God is always working even when you don't see it." Even though we might not see it with our physical eyes, God is working. God is doing miracles.

You might be sick, but God is doing a miracle.

God is always working every day because of the love He has for us, because of the way He cares about us, because He believes in us more than we even believe in ourselves. God is always working.

God is always working so that the glory can always go back to Him. God never sleeps. Verse 6 says: "So when He heard that he was sick, He stayed two more days in the place where He was. Then after this He said to the disciples, 'Let us go to Judea again.'" Hallelujah. Jesus said that He rejoiced that Lazarus died when He was not there.

Can you imagine how Jesus was happy because Lazarus died when He wasn't there? Remember, the Bible said that He loved him. Yet He was still glad that he died when He wasn't there.

That means even though our eyes might not see God, God has the power to control whatever you're going through.

Even though you might not see it with your physical eyes, wherever life is taking you, God is seeing it. Jesus said, "I am happy that it happened when I'm not present." So that God can be glorified.

I have my oldest daughter, who is a teenager. She's been asking for a phone for about three years now. All that time we would tell her, "We're sorry, we're sorry."

There were times when she would cry, get upset with us, and keep asking us to give her a phone. But we didn't give it to her for three years. Because we love her so much. And we knew the exact time that we should give her the phone. Because we know what phones can do to younger children. When we were celebrating her 14th birthday, we surprised her with a phone.

Let's say amen. She was very happy. She was very, very happy, and she was jumping around. Then she gave a speech. She said, "It has taken three years without a phone."

"I know that you had said I wasn't going to have a phone until I was 15 years old." "In other words, I really want to apologize because I stressed you a lot."

She also added, "It wasn't just because of me, but because all of my friends at school had phones." "I would always tell myself that my mom and dad love me, and I know they think I'm responsible." "But why are they not giving me a phone?" Then she said, "The reason you gave it to me now is not because I kept pushing."

Relating this to Mary and Martha, they were pushing Jesus to come. But Jesus had to wait for the right time.

My daughter told me, "It was the right time for me to get the phone."

"Now I'm responsible. If I need to sleep or do homework, I can put it away."

"I have the knowledge to handle a phone." "And it also taught me how to be patient." God had promised Abraham and Sarah that they would become the parents of nations. For a long time they waited to become the parents of nations. When Sarah heard this news, she laughed.

She was looking at the promise from a human perspective. She had already passed the age of giving birth. But God remained faithful to His promise. When God speaks, He is not going to change His plan for our lives.

Even though the promise may seem delayed, it will surely come to pass. Even though you go through difficult times, it will never change the promises of God. Hallelujah. He is a God who loves us day by day. He is a God who cares for us. He loves us even more than we love ourselves. Tell your neighbor, "God is so good." Hallelujah.

Amen. God is so good. When the time came, Sarah and Abraham received Isaac. It took a long time, but God responded in His right time. The timing is not the most important part.

The important part is knowing that God will respond. In Jeremiah 29:11, it speaks about the thoughts God has toward us. Tell someone sitting next to you, "God has good plans for you." Hallelujah.

Tell them, "God has good plans for you." He says: "For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord." And He says: "If you call upon Me, I will answer you." "I will listen to you." Our responsibility is to call upon the God of heaven.

It is not just to wait for the plan, but also to call upon Him. The third point: The glory of God brings life. Tell someone sitting next to you, "The glory of God brings life." Do you need life?

Even though Lazarus may seem dead within you, Jesus has the power because He is life.

We have life through Jesus. We have power through Jesus. We have authority through Jesus. Jesus has power, and if you have Him, then you have power and life. Verse 20 says: "Then Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met Him. But Mary was sitting in the house." Martha said to Jesus:

"Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died. But even now I know that whatever You ask of God, God will give You." Then in verse 25 Jesus said: "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?" Ask someone sitting next to you: "Do you believe this?"

Do you believe that Lazarus can be resurrected? Hallelujah. Do you believe? They came crying to Jesus saying: "Our brother has died, but we still know that whatever You ask of God, He will answer." In other words, they were saying:

"Jesus, You've delayed, and now he's dead." But Jesus never delays. Rather, our expectations of how He should answer are different from how He chooses to answer. He is always on time. Hallelujah. He is always on time.

But most of the time we want immediate answers. Jesus looked at them and said: "I told you, if you believe, he will live again."

Hallelujah. After Jesus looked at Mary, Martha, and everyone who was there mourning, they were all grieving. And Jesus wept. Then He asked them, "Where have you laid him?"

The reason Jesus wept is remarkable. He already knew He was going to raise Lazarus from the dead. But this also reveals how deeply He loves us. Even when we go through problems, He is with us. When you are crying, He cries with you. When you are weeping, He weeps with you.

Yet He is still waiting for His perfect time. And when that time comes, He will turn things around so that the glory belongs to God. When you're sad, He is saddened with you because He knows exactly what you feel. Hallelujah. The fourth point:

The glory of God is revealed through our faith. Tell someone sitting next to you, "The glory of God is in our faith." Amen. Do you have faith? Do you have faith? Do you have faith?

Only one person said yes! Hallelujah. Everybody say it again with faith. Let's let everyone see that we have faith. Hallelujah.

Faith is one of the ways God chooses to glorify Himself. So when you go through difficult times, always have faith.

Jesus asked Mary and Martha, "Do you have faith? Do you believe?" Do you have faith? Do you believe?

And 38 says then Jesus again grounding in himself came to the tomb. It was a cave and a stone lay against it. Then Jesus said, "Take away the stone."

Martha, the sister of him who was dead, said to him, "Lord, by this time there is a stench, for he has been dead four days."

On 40, Jesus said to her, "Did I not say to you that if you would believe, you would see the glory of God?"

So Jesus drew close to them and told them, "Let's go to the tomb." AND WHEN HE GOT THERE. AND SO IT SEEMS I TOLD YOU TO HAVE FAITH, I'm going to command you what to do. There are so many times that Jesus commands us something and we still hold to ourselves. AND WE HAVE DOUBT IN OURSELVES. AND WE HAVE FEAR INSIDE OF US.

BUT WHEN JESUS SPEAKS. WHEN YOU HAVE FAITH. I LIKE THE WORD THAT MARY AND MARTHA say that Lord, I KNOW WHEN YOU COMMAND GOD IS GOING TO LISTEN TO YOU.

EVEN THOUGH OUR BROTHER IS ALREADY dead and there is a stench, but is going to respond. Even though they were going through a pain, but they still HAD FAITH.

WHATEVER THAT YOU'RE GOING THROUGH, WALK with faith. If you see that life gets hard, WALK WITH FAITH. FAITH IS A GREAT pillar of every Christian. Lose everything else, but do NOT LOSE FAITH.

EVERYTHING IS POSSIBLE WHEN WE BELIEVE IN GOD. SO, IN THE STORY, JESUS TOOK TELLS them remove the stone. So, I'm going to ask you a question.

If Jesus tells you if God tells you to remove the stone that is laying on the tomb, will you remove it?

Do you believe? Do you believe? Hallelujah. Do you believe? Today, Lazarus has to resurrect in us. Hallelujah.

And on 41, then they took away the stone from the place where the dead man was laying, and Jesus lifted up his eyes and said, "Father, I thank you that you have heard me, and I know that you always hear me, but because of the people who are standing by, I say this that they may believe that you sent me. Now when he said these things, he cried with a loud voice "come forth" The one who is dead came out."

So today, let us call upon Lazarus to resurrect so that God can be glorified. Jesus looked up to Heaven and he said "Father I know that you always listen to me. I know that you love me. I know that I have a history with you. And he said Father who is in Heaven, I want you to do a miracle so that those who do not believe can believe. Amen.

Jesus looked up to Heaven. Lets everybody look up to heaven, like this. Lets everybody look up. Miracles are going to happen right now. So then after that, Lazarus came out of the tomb. He got out of the tomb. Jesus was calling on Lazarus saying "come out of the tomb!"

We've spent so many years, 9 years, going through a war in Congo. So many people are dying. So many children have become orphans. So many women have become widows. They cannot think of tomorrow because they think they're going to die any time. For 9 years we are calling on Lazarus to resurrect. But God is doing great miracles. When our eyes don't see it, we think nothing is happening.

But when we see how God has brought them together and gave them a humble heart to pray and be with us. God has told you to be humble, to come together and to support a country you've never been to. This is a picture of when Pastor Scott came to visit them. They have no hope for tomorrow. We've been calling upon Lazarus to resurrect for a long time. But we have faith. Lose everything else, but do not lose faith. Even though it takes time. Even though the situation you might be in might have change. But God, when he promises, He is going to accomplish! We know so well that Lazarus is going to resurrect! And we are going to witness forgiveness and people are going to live together in love. We know that Lazarus is going to resurrect.

Let us all stand up together. Let's pray. Let's lift our hands. Let's all lift our hands. God, we give you all the glory. You're a good God. You're a mighty God.

We call upon your name this morning so Lazarus can resurrect and give life. In Jesus' mighty name. Amen.

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**Scripture Reflection Questions:** Read this week's scripture together and discuss the following:

- What do we learn about God (e.g., traits, personality, what matters, priorities) in this passage?
- What do we learn about people, and ourselves in particular, this week?

**Sermon Reflection Questions:** Reflecting on this week's sermon, discuss the following:

- Do you believe that God is still working in your life?
- Do you believe He sees you and hears you?
- Do you believe He can bring life into your situation?

**Closing Question and Application:** Given what we've discussed together today, how might God want you to apply these learnings to your life or in the life of your community this next week? Who might you share this with?

**Closing group prayer:** Spend a few minutes together in your group sharing prayer requests and then praying together for each other. Take the challenging parts of your conversation to Jesus. Thank God for the time together, the conversation shared, the other people in the group, and for encouragement in the week ahead.