

John 11:21

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Then said Martha unto Jesus, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.

Analysis

Martha's statement expresses both faith and gentle reproach. 'If thou hadst been here' implies Jesus' presence prevents death, showing confidence in His power. Yet the conditional reveals disappointment—she believes He could have prevented this had He come sooner. Her words wrestle with divine sovereignty and human suffering. Martha speaks honestly to Jesus, modeling authentic prayer that expresses both faith and questions. Her struggle is holy ground.

Historical Context

Jewish theology affirmed God's power over death (1 Kings 17; 2 Kings 4) but resurrection was expected only at the last day. Martha's faith in Jesus' healing power was extraordinary for its time.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. How does Martha's honest struggle with Jesus model authentic prayer?
2. In what ways can we balance faith with honest questions about God's timing?

3. What does Jesus' acceptance of Martha's reproach teach about approaching God with our doubts?

Interlinear Text

εἶπεν	οὖν	ἡ	Μάρθα	πρὸς	τὸν	Ἰησοῦν	Κύριε	εἰ
said	Then	G3588	Martha	unto	G3588	Jesus	Lord	if
G2036	G3767		G3136	G4314		G2424	G2962	G1487
ἤ	ᾧδε	ὁ	ἀδελφός	μου·	οὐκ	ἂν	ἐτεθνήκει	
thou hadst been	here	G3588	brother	my	not	G302	died	
G2258	G5602		G80	G3450	G3756		G2348	

Additional Cross-References

John 11:32 (References Jesus): Then when Mary was come where Jesus was, and saw him, she fell down at his feet, saying unto him, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.

Matthew 9:18 (Parallel theme): While he spake these things unto them, behold, there came a certain ruler, and worshipped him, saying, My daughter is even now dead: but come and lay thy hand upon her, and she shall live.

John 11:37 (Parallel theme): And some of them said, Could not this man, which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died?

Psalms 78:19 (Parallel theme): Yea, they spake against God; they said, Can God furnish a table in the wilderness?

1 Kings 17:18 (Parallel theme): And she said unto Elijah, What have I to do with thee, O thou man of God? art thou come unto me to call my sin to remembrance, and to slay my son?