

WHY DO THE JUST DIE YOUNG?

JOHN 11

Theme: Jesus is the answer to life's hard issues

Purpose:

- **To provide biblical insight on questions that are hard and universal to every culture.**
- **To point the listener to Jesus as the ultimate answer to these questions.**

**Episode 6 of 7
HARD QUESTIONS ABOUT GOD SERIES
(15 MINUTE FORMAT)
CHRISTIAN RADIO DRAMA
“THE STORY WITHIN”**

006



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Hard Questions About God Series
Episode 6 of 7: Why Do the Just Die
Young?
Christ to the World Ministries

DIRECTORIAL INFORMATION

CAST OF CHARACTERS: (note voice quality required)

- **Each voice should be recognizably different from any other character.**
- **Some characters appear in multiple episodes of this series. Use the same voice for the same character.**

Thomas: **Narrator, a disciple of Jesus** (voice of a mature man)
Philip: **Disciple of Jesus** (voice of a mature man)
Jesus: **The Son of God** (warm voice of a mature man)
Mary: **The sister of Lazarus** (voice of a mature woman)
Martha: **Mary's sister** (voice of a mature woman)

Director's notes to all readers:

- These are radio **dramas**. The action and emotions are in the words. Take your time in reading the story; remember that the listener will hear these words only once; speak distinctly with appropriate emotion; carefully observe all punctuation (i.e., pause at commas, stop at periods, intensify at exclamation points, and give special emphasis to words in **bold** type).
- Observe all **music** cues (bold/small print) throughout the script.
- Observe **sound effects** directions (bold print) throughout the script.
- Observe all **voice** instructions (bold print) in parentheses throughout the script.

Note to translators: When Scripture is used, the print is in italics, and it is the NIV (1984). Scripture references are given to aid the translators and should not be read as part of the script.

WHY DO THE JUST DIE YOUNG?

Scripture reference: John 11

(Music: Theme music begins, then gradually fades to underscoring during comments by Program Host)

Program Host

Welcome to “The Story Within.”

In a world filled with contradiction and inequality, there are few things that we can all be sure of, and fewer things still that we will all experience equally.

Some persons live in wealth and splendor, while others of us live in poverty and want. Some will find reason to be happy and content, while others experience nothing but frustration, difficulties, and hopelessness. In the end, however, we will all face the same thing, for all of us will one day die and leave this world.

But even in death we find inequality: a wicked, selfish man lives to a ripe old age and dies in peace, surrounded by his treasures, while a remarkable, selfless young woman is struck down in the prime of her life by a terrible disease.

Dear friend, if you have ever asked the question: “Why do the just die young?”

I have good news for you: God is not only aware of every death of every righteous person, but He also cares for the troubled, and is ever present for those who are left behind in such tragedies.

Join us now as we continue our search for answers to Hard Questions About God as we take up our sixth episode on “Why do the just die young?”

(Music: swells to indicate scene change; then fades to soft underscoring)

Note that scene changes are depicted with music.

Scene One

INSERT: (Sound effects: nighttime; a soft breeze and crickets chirping in the background)

Thomas: (narrating) My name is Thomas, and I was a disciple of Jesus. For three years I followed Him as He traveled the countryside, preaching good news about the coming Kingdom of God, and healing hundreds of people of every sickness, disease and affliction imaginable.

INSERT: (Sound effects: add the sound of a softly crackling fire)

Thomas: (narrating, sighs) But even though I spent so much time with Jesus, I found myself asking questions – hard questions – that no one else seemed to be willing to ask.

INSERT: (Sound effects: add murmuring voices around the campfire)

Thomas: (narrating) By the time we headed for Jerusalem that fateful last time, Jesus was drawing huge crowds and attention everywhere He went, and everyone was expecting Him to go up to the city to join in the Passover celebration. But although Jesus decided to go, the trip was not a happy one, for there was danger afoot on every side, and among those of us who followed

Him, there was very real fear for His safety. And on the last night of our journey toward the city, I took the opportunity to raise the issue with Him one more time.

INSERT: (Sound effects: an owl hoots in the background, someone snores occasionally, and the murmuring slowly dies out as Jesus and Thomas speak)

Thomas: (softly) Jesus . . . may I ask You a question?

Jesus: Certainly, Thomas.

Thomas: Why must we go to Bethany? It is not even an hour's walk from the city; surely You know that the religious leaders in Jerusalem have spies there, and they will be watching for You.

Jesus: (softly) We go to My dear friend, Lazarus.

Thomas: Yes, but with all due respect, You Yourself have said that Lazarus is dead. He died three days ago. **(pause)** Do you really think it is wise to show Your face so close to Jerusalem, simply to pay Your respects to the dead?

Jesus: (softly) My Father in Heaven is not through with Lazarus yet.

Thomas: (beginning to grow frustrated) Then why did Your Heavenly Father allow him to die? From everything I have heard You say about him, Lazarus was a righteous man; he cared for the sick and gave generously to the poor.

Why would God allow such a decent man to die at so young an age?

INSERT: (Sound effects: by now, the murmuring is gone; we hear only the sounds of night, soft snoring, and an occasional hoot from the owl)

Jesus: Thomas, I understand your questions, but God does not always explain Himself.

Thomas: Even so, Jesus, why must You go to him? How is that going help anything?

Jesus: Sometimes, what appears at first to be a tragedy, turns out in the end to be something that brings glory to God.

Thomas: But, Jesus . . .

Jesus: Thomas . . .

Thomas: Yes?

Jesus: Trust Me on this . . . and trust My Father in Heaven.

Thomas: (softly) Yes, Jesus.

INSERT: (Sound effects: we hear only the sounds of the night)

(Music: swells to indicate scene change; then fades to soft underscoring)

Scene Two

INSERT: (Sound effects: daytime; birds singing and grasshoppers buzzing; we hear multiple footsteps as Jesus and His disciples walk along the road; in the background, we can hear the growing sound of wailing and mourning as they approach the house of Lazarus)

Thomas: Jesus . . . do you hear that? What is that awful noise?

Jesus: It is the family of Lazarus. What you hear is the sound of their mourning.

Thomas: Whew . . . it must be a very large family.

Jesus: It is indeed a large family; but there will also be friends in attendance and mourners up from Jerusalem. Lazarus is loved and respected by many people.

Thomas: Was; Lazarus **was** loved by many.

Jesus: Thomas . . .

Thomas: Yes?

Jesus: Remember – trust My Father in Heaven.

INSERT: (Sound effects: by now they are close to the house, and the wailing and mourning is louder; we hear the sound of rapidly approaching feet)

Thomas: Look, Jesus! It is Your friend's servant! Who is the woman coming with him?

Jesus: It is Martha, the sister of Lazarus.

Martha: (calling out from a distance) Jesus! Is that You?

Thomas: She looks rather angry.

Martha: (a little closer) Jesus . . . where have You been these last four days?

INSERT: (Sound effects: the footsteps come to a halt, followed by an awkward pause in which the wailing subsides)

Martha: (trying to control herself) *“Lord . . . if you had been here, my brother would not have died”* (John 11:21).

INSERT: Sound effects: another awkward pause)

Martha: (softly) *“But I know that even now God will give you whatever you ask”* (John 11:22).

Jesus: (softly) *“Your brother will rise again”* (John 11:23).

Martha: (suddenly frustrated) *“I know he will rise again . . . in the resurrection at the last day”* (John 11:24).

Jesus: *“I am the resurrection . . . and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die”* (John 11:25-26).

INSERT: (Sound effects: another pause in which we can hear Martha softly weeping)

Jesus: (softly) *“Do you believe this?”* (John 11:26).

Martha: (weeping) *“Yes, Lord; I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God who was to come into the world”* (John 11:27).

(Music: swells to indicate scene change; then fades to soft underscoring)

INTERMISSION

Program Host: Thank you for tuning in. You are listening to "The Story Within." Today we are following a series called, "Hard Questions of God," based on events and people found in God's Word. Previously in our story, a dear friend of Jesus by the name of Lazarus has died, raising questions among His disciples about the suffering and death of righteous people. Listen now, as we continue our story as Jesus visits the family and friends of the dead man,

and faces their questions as well.

(Music: underscoring fades out as sound effects return)

Scene Three

INSERT: (Sound effects: daytime; birds singing and grasshoppers buzzing; we can hear footsteps coming and going, and the sound of wailing and mourning coming from the house of Lazarus)

Thomas: (softly) Jesus . . . what are we waiting for?

Jesus: For Mary.

Thomas: Mary?

Jesus: Yes; she is Martha's sister.

Thomas: But . . . why did she not come before, with her sister?

INSERT: (Sound effects: add the sound of approaching footsteps)

Jesus: Because she is angry with Me for letting her brother die. **(whispering)**

Shh! Here they come.

INSERT: (Sound effects: the footsteps come to a halt, followed by another awkward pause; the wailing has stopped and all that we hear are the birds and grasshoppers)

Martha: You see Mary? Jesus has come after all.

Mary: Yes . . . four days after our brother has died.

Martha: (aside to Mary) Mary, perhaps you should not . . .

Mary: (coldly) *“Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died”*

(John 11:32).

Martha: (weeping) Oh, Mary . . .

Mary: (breaking down and weeping) Oh, Martha . . . what are we going to do without him?

INSERT: (Sound effects: the wailing breaks out fresh in response as the two women embrace, weeping)

Jesus: (growing emotional) Where . . . “*where have you laid him?*” (John 11:34)

Martha: (softly, still weeping) “*Come and see, Lord*” (John 11:34).

INSERT: (Sound effects: many footsteps, walking slowly as they head toward the tomb, weeping and wailing)

Thomas: (aside) Philip . . . I have never seen Jesus weep before.

Philip: (aside) Yes . . . weeping for His dead friend. “*See how he loved him!*” (John 11:36). But you hear what they are saying, do you not?

Thomas: Who?

Philip: Some of the people who are here from Jerusalem. The mourners.

Thomas: What are they saying?

Philip: I heard one of them saying, “*Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?*” (John 11:37)

INSERT: (Sound effects: Thomas suddenly stops, followed by Philip, while the others continue walking)

Thomas: Which one? Point him out! Who would say such a terrible thing?

Philip: It does not matter; they are all saying things like this. Come, Thomas; we are falling behind.

INSERT: (Sound effects: they begin walking again, more briskly)

Thomas: Do you know where we are going?

Philip: To the tomb, I suppose.

Thomas: (surprised) The tomb? But why?

Philip: I do not know. But look – there it is. The tomb.

INSERT: (Sound effects: the footsteps come to an end; we now hear murmuring mingled with the weeping and wailing)

Thomas: Wow. It must have taken four men to move that huge stone covering the opening.

Philip: Shh! Listen . . .

Jesus: (from a distance) Mary . . . have them “*Take away the stone*” (John 11:39).

INSERT: (Sound effects: shocked gasps of reaction from the crowd; the wailing and weeping gives way to a rise in murmuring)

Martha: (from a distance) “*But Lord, by this time there is a bad odor . . . for he has been there four days*” (John 11:39).

Thomas: (hissing) This is crazy! What is He going to do, Philip? Why would He want to open the tomb?

Philip: Shh!

Jesus: (from a distance) “*Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?*” (John 11:40). Take away the stone.

INSERT: (Sound effects: more shocked gasps from the crowd; footsteps, followed by a slow, heavy grinding sound as the men roll back the stone)

Thomas: Philip – we need to do something! Is He going to go inside the tomb and defile Himself? Why is He putting these poor people through this?

INSERT: (Sound effects: the grinding stops, the murmuring fades out, and all we hear for a moment is a gentle breeze and the birds chirping in the background)

Jesus: (from a distance, praying) *“Father, thank you that you have heard me.*

I knew that you always hear me, but I said this for the benefit of the people standing here that they may believe that you sent me” (John 11:41-42).

INSERT: (Sound effects: even the birds and wind are now silent for a moment as everyone and everything holds its breath)

Jesus: (from a distance, raising his voice) *“Lazarus . . . come out!”*

(John 11:43).

INSERT: (Sound effects: a moment of continued silence, followed by a sudden concussion of noise: a flurry of birds singing and taking flight, shocked gasps, screams, cheering, voices crying out – “Look!” “Look, it is Lazarus!” “He is alive!” The rejoicing continues, and slowly fades out)

(Music: underscoring music swells; then begins reprise of Theme music; softly underscoring comments of Program Host during Our Response to God’s Word)

OUR RESPONSE TO GOD’S WORD

Program Host

Lazarus, the young man who had died too soon, that day stepped out of the tomb alive and well, to the unbounded joy of his family and friends. In this one unparalleled moment in history, Jesus demonstrated that He alone has power,

not only over sickness and disease, but also over life and death itself. At that moment, all of the hard questions that Thomas had been struggling with faded into irrelevance, for here before his eyes he found Jesus, the Son of God, the answer to them all.

However, we face a dilemma: This same Jesus, the One and Only Son of God, came into the world not to deal with our hard questions, but to deal with our sin, for our sins cut us off from God. We need forgiveness, but we have nothing to offer God in order to gain His forgiveness.

In fact, the Word of God says, “*Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness*” (Heb. 9:22). The story in the Word of God of Abraham’s willingness to sacrifice his son and God’s provision of a ram is a picture of God’s sacrificial Lamb. John the Baptist spoke of Jesus: “*Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!*” (John 1:29). Jesus is God’s sacrificial Lamb offered as a sacrifice for our sins.

As we will see in our next episode, Jesus came into the world to die for our sins, to die in our place. The Word of God says in Isaiah 53, “*By his wounds we are healed. We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity] of us all*” (Isa. 53:5-6).

I’m going to pray a brief prayer from my heart to God. Listen to my prayer, and then when I have prayed, I will lead you to pray the same prayer.

Dear God, I realize that I cannot save myself. Thank You that Jesus died for my sins. Thank You that all of my sins were placed upon Him. Amen.

Now repeat the prayer aloud after me. We will pray it a portion at a time. Make the prayer your very own to God. Mean it with all your heart as you pray.

Dear God, (pause for person to repeat)

I realize that I cannot save myself. (pause for person to repeat)

Thank You that Jesus died for my sins. (pause for person to repeat)

Thank You that all of my sins were placed upon Him. (pause for person to repeat)

Amen. (pause for person to repeat)

Thank you for praying that prayer. In the next program we will learn how to trust Jesus and receive Him into our lives as Savior.

(Music: Theme music swells dramatically and fades to soft underscoring as broadcast ends)

Note to Broadcaster, Program Host, and Director

If this drama is to be broadcast as a part of the “Hard Questions About God” series, there should be a listener tag at the end of the broadcast, indicating that the next episode will be another drama on a hard question about God.

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