

God keeps promises, even though they have seemed impossible from the very start. There is the call of Abraham and Sarah, Jesus giving the blind beggar his sight, the raising of Lazarus. For some in Jesus's day and our own the activity of God must be according to their understanding, fit within their prejudices, or it's invalid. In other words, there's no God larger than their own concept of God. It's a classic case of God-in-a box. And not just any box. My box. They refuse to see the reality of God right before their eyes.

While much of John's gospel is about dying and last things, it's also about resurrection and eternal life. So these stories are basically about hope and trust, faith if you will, in some unimaginable life beyond the grave – a belief in what I know to be true though I may not be able to explain it. "I was blind and now I see!"

On one hand, a life of faith is very perplexing and we can so easily get caught up, or bound like the dead Lazarus, by our own rational, analytical minds with our desire for clarity and answers and proof in our instant answer world of technology and science. On the other hand, the faithful have faith in what cannot always be explained or seen. The blind man healed gets a chance at a life of faith. Lazarus gets a second chance at a life of faith. And those who are present get to witness a divine miracle and their faith is confirmed.

C. S. Lewis, in his book *Mere Christianity*, says that many Christians think of God as one who comes into our lives to do a little rearranging when what God is actually trying to do is give us a whole new life. Another author says, "How you feel about Jesus or how close you feel to God is meaningless next to how God acts upon you. How God indeed enters into your messy life and loves you through it, maybe whether you want God's help or not."

We often teach and act as if God's love and good favor depends upon something – believing certain things, doing certain things, or behaving a certain way. Too often we make it sound as if the Gospel is a puzzle or a riddle or a code to be figured out and when we finally get it right God will smile upon us. The Gospel is Good News and the first word is always God's love and mercy. It is a joyful and abundant and released life God intends and gives. Jesus didn't come to make our "to do" list longer, or make us busier, or make life crazier and more hectic. We do that pretty well ourselves. He came to set us free. God is a God of resurrecting power. God breathes new life into the lifeless. Yes, Lord. I believe!