

A Gift Better Than Life
The Gospel of John: That You May Believe | John 11:1-44
Southern Hills Baptist Church
March 19, 2017

Introduction: Jesus so often says and does that which is unexpected or counter-intuitive to our nature. He zigs when we would zag. Our passage tonight places Jesus in a situation where most of us would expect to know the move He should make, yet He goes in the opposite direction, leaving some people He loved in great pain, even costing one man his life. Through this He shows us the deepest expression of His love and gives a gift better than life.

A Gift Better Than Life: Jesus' Gift of Himself (vs. 1-16)

- **The Situation:** John identifies Lazarus, Martha, and Mary uniquely. They were all loved by Jesus. Few people get this description. Yes, Jesus loves everyone, but these people were more than followers, they were friends, and they held a special place in His heart. Martha and Mary had sent word to Jesus that Lazarus was on His deathbed.
- **The Response:** How would you respond to hearing a dear friend is sick, if you had the ability to heal them? You would go! Jesus decided to stay (vs. 6) because He loved them (vs. 5). Does this feel like love?
- **The Explanation:** Jesus' response may not have felt like love, but He is different, He is God, and He planned on giving them a gift greater than healing, a gift greater than life. Jesus' love is expressed most deeply when He gives the gift of Himself, revealing His person and work (vs. 4). He is the Bread of Life. He alone has Living Water.
- **Cross-References:**
 - John 14:21 – Jesus manifests (reveals) Himself to those He loves.
 - John 3:16; 17:3 – Jesus gives eternal life to those He loves and eternal life is forever knowing the Father and Son more fully.
- **Application:**
 - Don't measure the love of God by the ease of your life, by your wealth, health, or comfort. Jesus has clearly shown us that He is willing to allow those He loves to suffer greatly to deliver them a greater good, revealing Himself more fully to them.
 - Measure God's love by the lengths that He is willing to go to reveal Himself to you. Consider the incarnation, Creator become creature so that you fathom Him. Consider His supernatural compiling and preservation of the Scriptures. Consider the many ways He has shown Himself to you personally. His love is immeasurable.

Jesus' Gift of Himself: How Jesus Reveals Himself (vs. 17-44)

1. A Powerful Emotional Response: Jesus Wept

- **Scene of Grief:** As Jesus enters Bethany, He comes into a highly emotional scene as people grieve the loss of Lazarus. Both Mary and Martha are hurting and they indirectly ask Jesus, "Where were you?"
- **The Crying Creator:** Jesus responds to the weightiness of the situation with tears. Comprehend this, the Creator cries with His creation. Emotions are complex and messy, and Jesus' were as well.
 - **Weep with the Weeping** – Jesus hurt to see those whom He loved hurting. Jesus loves us tenderly.
 - **Disappointed** – "Deeply moved" in the Greek is a word of rebuke or warning. "Greatly troubled" is to be shaken/agitated. Jesus was frustrated over having His love questioned. He loved perfectly and sincerely.
- **Application:** Jesus loves perfectly and He has a tender heart for those who are suffering. Just because He has allowed suffering in your life doesn't mean He is uncaring towards your situation. He cares deeply and can relate to you as one who has suffered intensely.

2. A Powerful Self-Disclosure: The Resurrection and The Life

- **Martha's Hope:** In the midst of confessing her pain, Martha states her hope is in the fact that she will see Lazarus once again on the last day when the resurrection occurs.
- **Resurrection Has Come:** Jesus takes her future hope and makes it a present reality by telling her that He is the resurrection, meaning the resurrection finds its power and hope in Him.
- **Application:** The great enemy death is undone in Christ. Those who have trusted in Christ need not fear death as before (1 Thess 4:13-14)

3. A Powerful Picture of Salvation: Jesus' Call and Regeneration

- **He Can Deliver:** In raising Lazarus from the grave Jesus more than proves He can live up to the title and promises of resurrection.
- **Dead:** As Lazarus lay there in that tomb, dead, there was nothing he could do to free himself from death, it owned him. There was no price he could pay or move he could make. He was helpless. Spiritually, before Christ, we are the same. We are unable to take up spiritual life or even call out for help (Eph 2:1-2; Rom 8:7-8).
- **Jesus' Call:** Thankfully, just like Lazarus, Jesus calls out to those who are His, giving them new life (John 6:44-45). Salvation is a miracle of Jesus' grace.