

THIS IS JESUS

John 11: He Loves You To Death

- Terrance Story: (6th Grader I led to Christ who referred to his profession of faith as his decision "To Love Jesus Christ")
 - *It's not about what we do, it's not about what we give up, it's not what we wear, it's not about what we sing, it's not about coming to Hope HKY, it's about LOVING JESUS*
 - It's why we live the life we live!
 - It's why we follow His way of life
 - It's why we come to church and sing praises to Him, BECAUSE we LOVE HIM!
 - ***"We love because He first loved us."-1 John 4:19***
- **LOVE IS THE FOUNDATION OF THE GOSPEL**
 - The first verse we all learn growing up

- John 3:16- For God so what? LOVED the world
 - *Not that He was so fed up with sin*
 - *Not that He was so mad at satan*
 - *Not that He was annoyed with us*
 - *But He SO LOVED the world.... He gave His only begotten Son...*
 - *It all starts with His love*
- It's also found in the first song we sang if we grew up in church,
 - I believe is one of the most theologically profound lines we will ever sing
 - JESUS LOVES ME THIS I KNOW
- We can never out grow or out smart the fact that He LOVES US
 - But too often we become too callous to that truth...It becomes a cute cliché, or a a passive aggressive comment

Sunday, March 19, 2023

- But most of the time, the way to continue to grow spiritually is to get back to the basics.
- We need to allow the truth of His love to continually consume us on a regular basis..
- And Why does He love us? BECAUSE THATS WHO HE IS!
- **1 John 4:8- He who does not love does not know God, for God is love.**
 - Paul prays for the Ephesians in Chapter 3:18-19
 - He prays that we, "May be able to comprehend...what is the width and length and depth and height- To know the Love of Christ which passes knowledge"
 - And why?? Because he says, "that you may you may be filled with ALL the fullness of God."
 - Do you want to be filled with God? Do you want to experience the fullness of God in your life?? THINK ABOUT HOW MUCH HE LOVES YOU!!
- *Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends. (John 15:13 NKJV)...and that's what Jesus did for you and for me!!*
- When we try everything we can to wrap our minds around how deeply and truly Jesus loves us, it's changes EVERYTHING and RE-IDENTIFIES us!
 - Because when to come to accept the love of Jesus, you are No longer defined by old self, but you are rather defined by what Jesus has done and His love for you
- You Know, John chose to find his identity in the love of Jesus
- 5 times in his Gospel, he refers to himself as, "The disciple whom Jesus love."
 - Some could say that this was prideful or arrogant
 - He wasn't the only disciple who Jesus loved...

- But I would actually lean towards thinking that he did this out of a place of humility and acceptance
 - You see, because I believe that it would actually be more prideful not to accept it.
 - If I ever get to the place where I would say, *“Oh, there’s no way that God could love me. I’ve done too much, I’m too dirty, I don’t even know how to love myself, there’s no way that He does.”*
 - I would say THAT is actually more prideful because that is me saying that *“What I think and feel about me, is more powerful than what God thinks and says about me,”*
 - And also that is me thinking that there is something that I could, some sin I could commit that is more powerful than the Love of God? Now that’s pretty prideful and arrogant...
- You see, John was less worried about earning God’s love, deserving God’s love, or trying to decide how he saw himself
 - Rather he just lived his life infatuated with how much God loved him
 - And as a result, HE WAS DIFFERENT: You know when all of the disciples deserted Jesus, the only one that we have record of, being at the foot of the cross, was John. Right beside Mary.
- I believe that is a direct result of where he chose to find his Identity
 - *He wasn't just a fisherman*
 - *He wasn't just a sinner*
 - *He wasn't just a disciple*
 - *He was Loved!*
- We need more Christians that will identify themselves with the Love that God has for you over anything else!
- His Love is the reason why;
 - *If anyone is in Christ they are a NEW CREATION*
 - *We are declared righteous*

Sunday, March 19, 2023

- *We are redeemed from the clutches of sin and darkness*
- *We are Sons and Daughters of the King of the Universe!*
- THATS WHO YOU ARE, THATS WHAT IDENTIFIES YOU
 - Your sins do not define who you are!
 - Your faults, your failures, your past regrets, and your current struggles DO NOT define who you are!
 - Your IDENTITY, if you choose to accept it, is found in the Love of God and the completed work of Jesus!
- "I DON'T HAVE TIME TO MAINTAIN THESE REGRETS"
 - *I don't have time to get caught up beating myself up or feeling sorry for myself for how bad I've been, because His love is way too important and valuable to give anything else my attention*
- Don't Get Me Wrong: this is not a get-out-of-sin free card
 - This doesn't mean we can live however we want to or feel like because God will love us anyway
 - That mind set is still making it all about YOU!
- And it's NOT ABOUT YOU, OR ME, OR JALISA, OR ANYBODY ELSE IN HERE!
 - ITS ALL ABOUT JESUS!
 - That's what TERRANCE understood that we keep forgetting!
- We need more Christians who are willing to step up, and NOT compromise, and live the life that Jesus died in order to give us, BECAUSE GOD SO LOVED US AND WE JUST WANT TO SO LOVE HIM BACK
 - With that frame work set...let's take a look at John chapter 11 together:
- ***“Now a certain man was sick, Lazarus of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister***

Martha. It was that Mary who anointed the Lord with fragrant oil and wiped His feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick. Therefore the sisters sent to Him, saying, "Lord, behold, he whom You love is sick." When Jesus heard that, He said, "This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified through it." Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. So, when He heard that he was sick, He stayed two more days in the place where He was." John 11:1-6 (NKJV)

- So when Jesus came, He found that he had already been in the tomb four days. Then Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met Him, but Mary was sitting in the house. Now 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." Jesus said to her, "Your

brother will rise again." Martha said to Him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day." Jesus said to her, "I Am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?" She said to Him, "Yes, Lord, I believe that You are the Christ, the Son of God, who is to come into the world." John 11: 17, 20-27 (NKJV)

- Then, when Mary came where Jesus was, and saw Him, she fell down at His feet, saying to Him, "Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died." Therefore, when Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her weeping, He groaned in the spirit and was troubled. And He said, "Where have you laid him?" They said to Him, "Lord, come and see." Jesus wept. Then the Jews said, "See how He loved him!" -John 11: 32-26 (NKJV)

- PRAY
- If you look at the way Martha and Mary send word to Jesus it shows us that
- **GOD IS MOTIVATED BY HIS LOVE:**
 - "Lord....he whom you love is sick" (V.3)
- Now that seems pretty general
- Doesn't Jesus love everybody??
- They could have said it several different ways:
 - *Jesus, our brother is sick*
 - *Jesus, Your servant Lazarus is sick*
 - *Jesus, Your boy Lazy, he ain't doin too well*
- But they don't even say his name! Why??
- Because they understood that what moves the Heart of God, is not what we can do, not what we can bring to the table, it's not our position, it's not even how much we go to church, pray, and read our bible!
- They understood that what moves the Heart of God, more that anything else, is His love for them
- Which also makes verses 5-6 pretty confusing
- ***"Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. So, when He heard that he was sick, He stayed two more days in the place where He was." -John 11:5-6 (NJKV)***
- At first glance, I'm thinking, "Wait, if Jesus loved them, wouldn't He drop everything and go straight there??"
- So our assumption would be, that if someone were to act like that, they don't really care and they're not really loving.
- However, those conclusions are drawn from our version of love
 - And our version of love, is more about the avoidance of pain
 - ***God allows us to experience the low points of life in order to teach us lessons***

that we could learn in no other way- CS Lewis

- We talked a little bit about this this other week, but You'll hear that so often, "If God was really loving, He wouldn't allow bad things to happen"
- And we get so caught up on that's because we are naturally inclined to look for someone to blame whenever things go bad...just look at Adam in the garden, blaming Eve and then blaming God for giving him Eve right??
- As long as sin exists, brokenness and sickness and hardship and pain will continue to exist
- Sin and suffering have a cause and effect relationship
 - The day that sin entered into the world, death and pain and suffering entered with it.
 - We would like to believe that only good things should happen to good people and

bad things should only happen to bad people

- That would be easier, that would put the ball into our court, that would allow us to explain the pain without acknowledging that there is anything outside of our control
- But the problem with that is, we would have to determine what our standard for good is and where it comes from.
 - If what is good and bad is left up to the determination of the individual, inevitably ideas are going to clash and chaos is going to ensue as a result.
 - Also, if we hold to the conviction that people should get what they deserve, then we put ourselves in a very slippery slope because we "all have sinned and fallen short of the Glory of God." Jesus said, "No one is Good except God alone."
- Christianity doesn't believe that only good things should happen to good people or only bad things should happen to bad people, and

christianity definitely doesn't hold to people getting what they deserve. Because the basis of our faith is that Jesus went to a cross that He didn't deserve to offer us a forgiveness we didn't deserve.

- In fact, as Andy Stanley once put it, **"Christianity believes that the worst possible thing happened to the best possible person."** -Andy Stanley
 - Brokenness exists because sin exists, and the Love of God caused Him to look into our world, and no, He didn't eradicate the pain because to eradicate it He would have to eradicate all of sin which would take all of us with it
 - So instead, He chose to write Himself into the brokenness and said "I'm gonna go through it with you, and FOR you, because I love you."
- CS Lewis once told about one of his dear friends, Dorothy Sayers. He describes her as a tall woman, not particularly attractive, but she

had a brilliant mind. She was one of the first women to graduate from Oxford University and became a renowned writer of detective fiction.

- She wrote a series of Novels called "The Lord Peter Wimsey Stories."
- Lord Peter, her main character, was an aristocratic detective, who solved mind twisting mysteries, but he was single and alone.
- And at one point, in the middle of the series, seeming out of nowhere there is a woman introduced into the story named Harriet Vane. And she is described as tall, not particularly attractive, one of the first women to graduate from oxford, and a writer of detective fiction. She and Lord Peter fall in love, get married, and solve mysteries together.
- Now many speculated that the author looked into the world that she created within her novel, she looked into the life of the character she created, and she saw and felt his loneliness and his pain, fell in love with him,

and wrote herself into the story just to save him.

- And that is exactly what God has done for you and for me. He looked into our world, the world that He made, and He wrote Himself into His own creation, in the person of Jesus Christ, in order to save us.
- And He intentionally preserved hundreds of eye witness accounts of who He is, in the Bible, so we can continually learn more about Him. And one of the most overwhelming aspects of his character and nature that is so clear is that that He wants us to know about is His Love.
- And I Believe, we see here, in John chapter 11, that He wants us to focus less on the miracle He performs and more on the love that He possesses and that He offers freely.
- The point of the Gospel is that He literally Loved You to Death
- So we see that what Motivates God to Move is His Love, and we also see that:

- GOD'S LOVE IS PERSONAL

- Jake's blessing...
- God's love does not always give us what we want or what is most comfortable, but God's love does always give us what we need most, and meet us exactly where we are.
- And what we need more than anything else is a greater knowledge and understanding of who He is.
- Now Jesus did not cause Lazarus to die, in fact, more than likely based on the timeline we see, Lazarus was probably already dead by the time Jesus ever even got the news
- However, Jesus did tarry, and in His wisdom and discernment and love, He was going to use this tragedy to reveal more of who He is.
- Jesus says in verse 4, ***"This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified through it."***
-John 11:4 (NKJV)

- Jesus says that the way that sickness and death is NOT going to win, is by God getting the glory and Me being able to show everyone more of Who I Am.
- **"So when Jesus came, He found that he had already been in the tomb four days."**
-John 11:17 (NKJV)
 - Now this was significant, and this is how I know that Jesus was very intentional about His timing.
 - It wasn't the immediate response that everyone wanted, but it was how He was going to get the most Glory.
 - Because many of the Jewish people at that time had this belief and superstition that once a person dies, the spirit of that individual would hover around the body for 3 days, and during those three days there was still a possibility of them being healed and coming back to life.
- But, on the 4th day, the spirit would leave the body, and that's when true death sets in and all hope is lost.
- Now, they all knew that Jesus had the power to heal, but they couldn't fathom that Jesus could have ultimate power over death.
 - We see that throughout the gospels when Jesus over and over again, tells them that He is going to be taken, arrested and killed, and then rise 3 days later, they still thought He was talking in figures of speech!
 - It wasn't until after the crucifixion and resurrection, that anyone could believe it until they actually saw it.
- So Jesus had healed all kinds of sicknesses, disabilities, and diseases, and every single one of those healings was a metaphor for His power over the effects of sin, but now He is going to show a glimpse of His power over death, and yet He still does so in a very personal and loving manner.

- When He arrives on the scene, and He's approached by each of the sisters at different times, and they both say the same exact statement to Him, but He has two totally different responses
- It's so interesting, because Martha get's to Him first and she says, "Lord if You had been here, my brother wouldn't have died."
- Jesus is straightforward and direct with her, almost as if He's somewhat rebuking her, he tells her, "Your brother will rise again."
 - She says, "Yea I know, at the end of time, when all things are fulfilled, he'll rise again..."
- But Jesus says, no no no no.... **"I Am the Resurrection and the Life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?"** She said to Him, **"Yes, Lord, I believe that You are the Christ, the Son of God, who is to come into the world."** -John 11:25-27 (NKJV)
- You see Jesus understood what Martha needed most at that moment. Martha, we see in other passages, was a "Doer" she was a "Go-Getter."
- Maybe you're familiar with the account on Luke 10, when Jesus is over at Mary and Martha's house for dinner, and Mary is there just sitting at Jesus' feet listening to all of His stories and teachings.
- But where's Martha? She cooking, she's serving, she working, she taking care of everything and everybody.
 - She was the type of person always doing something and taking care of people and things always needed to be moving forward for her.
 - So Jesus, knowing her better than anyone else on the planet would, He knew what she needed more than anything else was Assurance. That things weren't over, that Jesus was still working for her when there was nothing that she could do.

- Now Mary was different, Mary wasn't a "Doer" Mary was a "Feeler."
 - Mary didn't need assurance, Mary needed someone to cry with her.
 - And Jesus in His infinite love and wisdom, knew exactly what each individual needed at the exact moment they needed it.
 - Because His love is personal, and He loves each of us the exact way that WE need to be loved
 - Now, His response to Martha makes a whole lot more sense to me than His response to Mary does.
- Because in verse 32, Mary comes up to Jesus and says the SAME EXACT thing to Jesus that Martha did, she said ***"Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died."*** ***Therefore, when Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her weeping, He groaned in the spirit and was troubled. And He said, "Where have you laid***

him?" They said to Him, "Lord, come and see." Jesus wept. Then the Jews said, "See how He loved him!" -John 11:32-36 (NKJV)

- John 11:35 might be the shortest, but one of the most theologically profound verses in the New Testament.... *"Jesus Wept."* -John 11:35 (NKJV)
 - My question is, why would He weep?
- Because if I'm Jesus in this situation, I'm arriving on this scene ready to perform an incredible miracle that's gonna blow everyone's mind and in just a few short moments they were going to go from crying to celebrating! We about to turn mourning to Dancing, PRAISE GOD!
 - I'd be saying, where's your faith! Dry your eyes, and watch what I'm about to do!
 - But that's not the heart of our Savior
 - Yes, He knows the Victory that's going to come, He knows that the pain won't last forever, He knows that He is ultimately

Sunday, March 19, 2023

going to take care of all of it, but yet He still takes the time to feel the pain and cry with you.

- *Man some of the cliché sayings that we come up with at funerals drives me crazy sometimes....*
 - *I remember being a sophomore in high school, one of my best friends that year, was killed in a car accident. He blew a stop sign and got hit full speed by a fire truck*
 - *And I was in church the next Sunday, where he had also attended, and the pastor said, don't you cry for that boy. Your tears are selfish! He's in a better place, he's dancing with Jesus, we need to be celebrating his eternal life!*
 - *And I was sitting there confused, trying to dry my eyes and suck it up because I didn't wanna be selfish!*
 - *But the older I got the more I realized, no, God created these emotions to help us work through and process through the*

pain, and if Jesus took the time to weep, even when He knew the eternal glory, we should take the time to weep too, while knowing that He weeps with us!

- *Also a couple years ago, we had a lady in our church, who I was pretty close with, pass away in a freak tractor accident. Completely unexplainable, single mom, with a 16 year old little girl.*
 - *And I hear people saying things like, "Well it was her time..." "God decided to take her home..."*
 - *And I was like, "DON'T YOU DARE TELL THAT LITTLE GIRL THAT GOD TOOK HER MOMMA AWAY FROM HER!"*
 - *What kind of view of God is that going to give to a young teenager??*
 - *God didn't take her life! Sin and the brokenness of this world led to that tragic accident, but whenever death came for her...God in His Love and His Mercy*

provided a way that made it impossible for death to win.

- *God didn't take her, but rather He caught her and brought her into eternal life, whenever death tried to take her away.*
- It's very clear from our passage today that God hates pain, He hates sin and the toll that it has taken on His children, and he HATES death.
- In verse 33, when it says "*Jesus groaned in His spirit*" that word groaned literally means to "snort with anger."
 - He was ticked off at death, and He was going to do something about it.
- ***Then Jesus, again groaning in Himself, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone lay against it. 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." Jesus said to her, "Did I not say to you that if you would***

believe you would see the glory of God?" Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead man was lying. 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 said this, that they may believe that You sent Me." Now when He had said these things, He cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth!" And he who had died came out bound hand and foot with graveclothes, and his face was wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Loose him, and let him go." -John 11:38-44 (NKJV)

-THIS IS THE GOSPEL!

- *"Christianity is not about bad people becoming good, it's about dead people coming alive in Christ"*

- All of us at some point, if not now, we're lying in that tomb. Dead. Not knowing true life, wrapped up in our sin, our addictions, our depression, our anger, our bitterness...the list could go on and on
- Then Jesus died, and rose again, conquered sin and death and commanded the stone to be rolled away for your tomb.
- For too long we stayed there, struggling, trying to loose ourselves, trying to find our own way out
- Then we hear the voice of Jesus saying, "SON/ DAUGHTER, COME OUT"
- Then we follow His voice and we come to Him
- But we're still wrapped up, in all of this guilt and shame and all of these regrets
- And Jesus looks at us, and He sees all of the wrappings He sees how we're bound hand and foot, He sees all of the struggles and all of the pain
- And He declares to all of it
- LOOSE HIM AND LET HIM GO!
 - And notice that the wrappings don't instantly fall, but notice He tells the people around him to loose him and let him go
 - This is why we need church
 - This is why we need each other
 - This is why we need community groups and family groups
 - BECAUSE WE'RE ALL IN THIS TOGETHER
 - Because it's whenever we move towards Jesus and we find that we still have some wrappings that we have allowed to hold us for TOO LONG
 - And we come together, and we bear one another's burdens,
 - we encourage each other,

Sunday, March 19, 2023

- We build each other up
- And we point each other towards Jesus
- BECAUSE IN JESUS WE FIND FREEDOM
 - IN JESUS:
 - YOU'RE FREE: from the powers of hell
 - YOU'RE FREE: from condemnation
 - YOU'RE FREE: from your anger, bitterness, and depression
 - YOU'RE FREE: from past regrets
 - BECAUSE IN JESUS:
 - YOU'RE FREE: to live!
 - YOU'RE FREE: to have life in Christ!
 - YOU'RE FREE: to have a relationship with God and community with each other
 - YOU'RE FREE: to live in peace
 - YOU'RE FREE: to live in power
- YOU'RE FREE: to have Life and Life Abundantly, for ALL of eternity
- FOR WHOM THE SON SETS FREE IS FREE INDEED!!
 - Jesus approached Lazarus' grave with heated determination because He knew that He was going to war with death, for you and for me.
 - Because He knew that for us to experience freedom, He was going to have to give up His
 - He knew that by giving Lazarus back His life, it would cost Him His own
 - *For us to be loosed, He would have to be chained*
 - *For us to be honored, He would have to be scorned*
 - *For us to be forgiven, He would have to be shamed*

Sunday, March 19, 2023

- *For us to be healed, He would have to be torn apart*
- *For us to come out of the grave, He would have to go in to His*
 - *He literally, Loved You to Death*
- But praise God that the Death couldn't hold Him
- And for the joy set before Him, He endured the cross, because He knew the Victory on the other side and He invites all of us to stand in His Victory with Him.