

## John 11:5-16 | Afflicted for the Glory of God Pt. 2

### Parable of the Mustard Seed

Matt. 13:31-32 'The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field; and this is smaller than all other seeds, but when it is full grown, it is larger than the garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and nest in its branches.'

### Prayer

#### Responsive Reading

Q1: What is the Chief end of man?

A1: To glorify God and to enjoy Him forever.

Q2: What rule has God given to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy Him?

A2: The Word of God, which is contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, is the only rule to direct us how to glorify and enjoy God.

Q3: What do the Scriptures principally teach?

A3: The Scriptures principally teach, what man is to believe concerning God, and what duty God requires of man.

John 11:5-16 'Now **Jesus loved** Martha and her sister and Lazarus. So when He heard that he was sick, He then stayed two days longer in the place where He was.

Then after this He said to the disciples, "Let us go to Judea again."

The disciples said to Him, "Rabbi, the Jews were just now seeking to stone You, and are You going there again?"

Jesus answered, '*Are there not twelve hours in the day? If anyone walks in the day, he does not stumble, because he sees the light of this world. But if anyone walks in the night, he stumbles, because the light is not in him.*' This He said, and after that He said to them, 'Our friend Lazarus has **fallen asleep**, but I go, so that I may **awaken him out of sleep**.

The disciples then said to Him, "Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will recover."

Now Jesus had spoken of his death, but they thought that He was speaking of literal sleep.

So Jesus then said to them plainly, "**Lazarus is dead**, and I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, so **that you may believe**; but let us go to him."

Therefore Thomas, who is called Didymus, said to his fellow disciples, "Let us also go, so that we may die with Him."

**Review v. 1-4** The problem of Lazarus' affliction. An affliction that will not lead to death.

Weaved together in this chapter is the components of both love and death.

We see three specific times about Jesus' love identified and then death explained in a variety of ways. Specifically the death of Lazarus. That is the major subject.

**The problem broadened out. The problem is Death.**

- I. v.8 we have the problem of death 'stoning Jesus'.
- II. v.9-10 Jesus offers an axiom about life and death.
- III. v.11 Jesus refers gives a subtle reference to the death of Lazarus
- IV. v.12-13 The Disciples misunderstand Jesus about Lazarus' death
- V. v.14-15 Jesus is clear and direct about Lazarus' death.
- VI. v. 16 The disciples decide they want to participate in this same death.

**Death is a common** and normal part of life. But many people are **overwhelmingly fearful** of their own death and the death of their loved ones. We see that here, that Martha and Mary are concerned about the death of Lazarus. The disciples are concerned about the death of Jesus.

Jesus comforts each of their concerns.

Death is a common problem in society and it is a common problem where people easily play upon this fear to make money and manipulate people.

It doesn't take too much searching before you come across an advertisement to take this pill or this vitamin and you will end up living a few more years.

If you feel like you are getting older start eating this food and stop eating that food. Do this exercise and do more of this and less of that.

**The suggestions offered** around extending your lifespan range from not eating carbs, to not drinking soda, do drink water. Take more fish oil. Don't eat sugar. Do eat vegetables. Walk more. Sleep more.

There ends up not being enough time in the day to walk enough, sleep enough, take enough fish oil and consume enough water.

**What's ironic about this** is that many people willfully obey the 'thou shalls and the thous shall nots' of the consumer culture commandments all the while claiming you should never be religious with regards to the commandments of God and the Bible.

**If you weren't concerned** about the possibility of your own death, well, then just watch the evening news. Practically every story refers to something to do with death, sickness, loss, theft, destruction, or some kind of catastrophic problem that is most likely irrelevant to your daily life, nevertheless, you are not so subtly reminded of the constant potential of death.

And it just so happens that the commercial that interrupts the reporting that has instilled a high level of fear, just so happens to solve the very problem that you are now fearful of.

But it doesn't even stop there. The mindset around safety, protection, and avoiding problems is often so pervasive it cripples a person's ability to take confident initiative.

There IS wisdom in avoiding foolish decisions and stewarding both your body and your life, but you should be assured that you have no actual ability to add a single hour to your day.

**There was a university study** done a few years back by the medical department where the results showed that if you cured every major disease; cancer, heart disease, diabetes, etc. you would only extend the global life expectancy by 3 years.

Jesus said. **Matt. 6:27 'who of you by worrying can add a single hour to your life?'**

It is important to care about life, but it is useless to worry about life.

It is wise to guard, and nurture, and develop and steward life. But it is frivolous to pensively worry about life.

**Mark 4:19 'the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things, choke out the word'**

Because of the massive influence of world affairs over a person's mind the Word of God, the Gospel message, becomes unfruitful and seemingly useless to that person.

As we see here in this passage, you have no actual control over the timing of your death.

### **Questions and thoughts to investigate**

-Jesus loved Martha, Mary, and Lazarus -*show the distinctions of φιλει and αγαπε love.*

*Synonyms. The friendship of Jesus and Lazarus and the love of his family.*

-Jesus stayed two days longer (*to give even greater proof that the resurrection was real and overcome the Jewish superstition of a spirit hovering over a body for 3 days*)

-Jesus said lets go to Judea

-the disciples knew Jesus would be killed if Jesus went back

-Why did Jesus want to go back to Judea, knowing He would be killed?

-What does Jesus mean by His response about walking in the day and stumbling at night? *This is a proverb about God being in ultimate control over life and death. The light of your day cannot be extended by anything you do.*

-What does Jesus' response have to do with Lazarus being asleep? Ref. Act

-What does Jesus mean by awaking Lazarus out of his sleep? *It has clear undertones about salvation. Being raised by Christ in salvation. Those who are spiritually dead are numb and unresponsive to the glory of God.*

-Thomas' statement about let's go die as well.

This chapter is one of the most complicated chapters to address in the Gospel of John.

Dealing with the People: Lazarus, Mary and Martha, the Disciples/Thomas, and Jesus.

- I. v. 5-8 'Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister Lazarus. So when He heard that he was sick, He then stayed two days longer in the place where He was. Then after this He said to the disciples, 'Let us go to Judea again.'" The disciples said to Him, "Rabbi, the Jews were just now seeking to stone You, and are You going there again?'

**Lazarus:** this is not the same Lazarus from the parable Rich Man and Lazarus in **Luke 16**.

Lazarus is actually a **common Jewish name**, Eliazer, 'the one God helps'

We know here that Jesus loves Lazarus. In two ways we see this, **philius and agape**.

In verse 3 'Mary and Martha say to Jesus 'the one who you **love/φιλει/philius** is sick'

The friend that you love is sick. This same expression is used in **John 21:17**, Jesus asks 'Peter do you **love/φιλει/philo** me?'

Jesus is asking him; Are you a sincere friend? Are you sincerely, loyal, as a loving friend?

Later in this very chapter, the same word is used, the Jews describe v. 36 'the Jews were saying, "See how He **loved/φιλει/philo** him!"'

The Jews recognized the friendship between Jesus and Lazarus. That was evident to them. What they couldn't see was the deeper, more meaningful love taking place between Jesus and this family.

Martha, Mary, and Lazarus are members of the same family. They are obviously a Christian family. We see that in v. 26 Martha states 'Yes, Lord; I have believed that You are the Christ, the Son of God, even He who comes into the world.'

**Christian families** are families that believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and that Jesus Christ has saved them from their sin.

**Christian families** are not perfect families but they are families that recognize God's truth, God's order, and devote themselves both to God's truth and God's order. This is obviously one of those families.

But in v. 5, John transitions the conversation about the perspective of Mary and Martha, of how they understood that Jesus was a loving and sincere friend of Lazarus, to use a different word in v. 5, stating the Jesus '**loved/ηγαπε/agape** Martha and her sister and Lazarus'

The point of highlighting this, is that this is a **completely distinct understanding** from the other position.

**It is NOT** as if it is better or superior in its style of love, however, it is specially distinct.

This is a Divine expression of love, it is actually the same expression of love that John describes himself as.

I understand, that if you have ever heard a sermon you have probably heard someone talk about these distinctions of love. They are distinct expressions. But they are most routinely misrepresented, taken out of their proper context and really just used to prove an over-arching pre-conceived notion.

This love, philio and agape, **is NOT a contradiction in terms** but/INSTEAD a distinction in terms because John wants to express a full picture of the setting.

#### **Agape, At the Lord's Supper and the Cross**

**John 13:23** 'One of his disciples, whom Jesus **loved/ηγαπα**, was reclining at the table.

**John 19:26** 'When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he **loved/ηγαπα** standing nearby, he said to his mother, 'Woman, behold your son!' Then He said to the disciple, "Behold your mother! From that hour the disciple took her into his own household.'

We see a distinction in what John writes about love. **It is not**, at least specifically with regard to these passage and settings, it is NOT about friendship.

This distinction of love is far more devoted, responsible, accountable, loyal, and self-sacrificing.

Even in the expression of the cross, John recognized, that he must now **take up responsibility** of Jesus' mother. This is Not out of honorarium to Mary, but out of necessity and the obvious love of a family.

This connection from Lazarus, to John at the Lord's Supper, to John and Mary/Jesus' mother, at the cross highlights the depth of love of a Christian family that is far beyond superficiality.

I have a lot of different friends that I know care about me but they do not have the same devotion, responsibility, accountability, loyalty, and self-sacrificing nature to me, NOT because they are unloving, but merely because they are not family members.

They don't have those responsibilities incumbent upon them!

But we see a transition in the usage of the word that John wants us to recognize that Jesus loves this family beyond superficial friends and loves them to the degree that He is going to take devotion, responsibility, loyalty and even self-sacrificing measures to care for this family in this loving way!

John uses the idea of love frequently in his writing. He uses it **both as a indictment** to the Pharisees and a **indicator for the Christian**.

### **Love as an indictment.**

John 3:19 'the light has come into the world and people loved the darkness rather than the light because of their works were evil.'

John 5:42 'I do not receive glory from men; I know that you do not have the love of God within you. I have come in My Father's name, and you do not receive Me; if another comes in his own name, you will receive him. How can you believe, when you receive glory from one another and you do not seek the glory that is from the one and only God?'

John 8:42 'If God were your Father, you would love me'

John 12:43 'they loved the glory that comes from man more than the glory that comes from God.'

**John frequently connects:** Belief, Love, Obedience, and God's glory together in a singular concept of being a Christian.

### **Love as an indicator of Christian faith.**

John 13:34 'a new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another.'

John 14:15 'if you love Me, you will keep my commandments'

John 14:21 'whoever has my commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves me. And he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him'

John 15:9 'Abide in my love'

John 15:12 'this is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you'

**How is it that Christ demonstrated His love toward us?** In a much more profound and serious way than temporary, superficial friends.

**Christ is a friend to sinners** but He is far more than just a friend as the world understands friendships.

The Bible talks of the importance of good friends.

Pr. 18:24 'there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother'

Pr. 27:6 'Faithful are the wounds of a friend'

But to elevate friendship above family is actually foolishness.

Christ doesn't just love Lazarus as a friend. He loves Him as a family member. And that is ultimately what the result of Christian love is. It is a devoted, loyal, responsible, accountable, self-sacrificing love.

**Too much of Christian culture** has reduced the understanding of Christ's love because it doesn't want to be devoted, loyal, responsible, accountable or self-sacrificing.

This family that Jesus has come to; Martha, Mary, and Lazarus is a **family of Christian believers**.

This family of Christians has an affliction. They are concerned that their brother is going to die.

As a matter of fact, Lazarus does die. Jesus says in v. 15 **'Lazarus is dead'**

**So if Lazarus is afflicted and Lazarus is dead; How is this an affliction that does not lead to death?**

**Because we see that Jesus uses the circumstances of the affliction** to bring greater glory to Himself and His Father/God.

**This is a pretty simple concept to grasp** but Jesus has to perform these miracles to give Himself glory.

**Miracles show the glory of Jesus.**

**For Jesus to create water to wine**, they need a deficit of wine. **For Jesus to heal the royal official's son**, the son has to be injured. **For Jesus to cause a lame man to walk**, the man first has to be lame. **For Jesus to multiply the loaves and the fish**, there first has to be a scarcity of loaves and fish. **For Jesus to give sight to the blind man**, the man must first be blind.

**And for Jesus to raise Lazarus from the grave, Lazarus must first be dead.**

**So why does Lazarus get afflicted? So that he can die. And, Why does Lazarus die? So that he can be resurrected. And why does Lazarus need to be resurrection? So that Christ can demonstrate His power over life. And why does Christ need to demonstrate His power over life? So that you would trust Him with your life. And 'in believing, you might have eternal life.'**

**AND, why would you need to believe in Christ? Because it brings glory to God.**

Jesus **regularly connects both faith in Him and love of Him**, as a package concept.

**Faith in Christ, Love of Christ, and Obedience to Christ is a package deal of the Christian life.**

It really does culminate to create a family of believers. This is a culminating miracle and it is culminating that it is the final public miracle Jesus performs and it is the most profound miracles.

It is also a culminating moment that Jesus does this with a family that He knows as a family and loves as a Christian family.

Friendships of believers are recognized at a surface level, **but in reality** it is the family of believers that demonstrate actual Christian love **that goes beyond superficial religion.**

Love, actual Christian love, is devoted daily. Christian love is shown in unwavering loyalty. Christian love is absent of desire but is always committed in its duty.

I remember having a commander in the military saying when we were in a tough spot once, **'Dave – you don't have to like, you just have to love it'** LOL.

The point being, when you actually have devotion, your love extends beyond your temporary desires.

Of course, we have all heard people make the expression 'I love that person to death.'

Their affection for a person is so profound that it takes them all the way to the point of death.

So one might say, **'oh that's drastic' 'that's too much'** – No it's not, it's the Gospel.

Christ's love for you and I is so profound that it takes Him all the way to the point of death.

You've heard the saying before that when the going gets tough the tough get going.

Well, for family, the tougher it gets the tighter they get. For the Christian family, the tougher things get the tighter they get.

If you take a family unit and apply all the pressure in the world a real family will never break. That pressure will build that family into an even more cohesive unit.

The thing about family is it doesn't need a marketing campaign. Family doesn't need a slogan or an advertisement.

**Family connection is spiritual.** You see the Pharisees recognize the friendship connection. But they don't understand the family connection.

Look at this again with the **substance of Christian love** in Christian family. These things that are indicators of a family of love.

### **The substance of Christian love.**

John 13:35 'By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another' *'open rebuke is better than love carefully concealed'* Prov.

John 15:9 'As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love.' *'offense is a stumbling block to love'* *offense acts as an affliction toward love*

John 15:10 'if you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in His love.' **Counter this with, Matt. 24:12** *'because lawlessness will be increased, the love of many will grow cold*

John 15:13 'Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends.'

### **Pagan/Worldly Love vs. Christian Love**

*Pagan love is self-seeking and self-ingratiating, Christian love is self-sacrificing. Pagan love creates afflictions, Christian love comforts in afflictions. Pagan love causes problems, Christian love solves problems. Pagan love compromises God's will, Christian love establishes God's will.*

*Pagan love rejects the truth, Christian love rejoices in the truth.*

John 17:26 'I made known to them your name, and I will continue to make it known, that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them.'" There is a spiritual connection in a Christian family that cannot be broken because it is delivered by God Himself.

The Christian family both the nuclear family and the church family is an organization that is created by God. It is a spiritual organization.

To be frank nothing can break this organization apart because it is a family and by design this family was not created by man but by the will of God.

John 1:13 the children of this family are 'born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or of a husband's will, but born of God'

This love of Martha, Mary, and Lazarus is a love that has been born from above and it is

### **Transition of philios to agape**

What are we to make of the subtle transition? I believe it is powerful. It shows us at first glance that Jesus obviously cared for Lazarus as a genuine, sincere friend.

This is a love that never fails.

This type of love that John tells us that Jesus has for this family is this kind of love. This type of love creates a unified care for one another. This type of love creates a unified concern that is beyond superficial matters.

1 Cor. 13:3 'love is patient and kind and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant, does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered, does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails'

This is Christian love.

There is a type of love that is pagan. It is non-Christian, and it has over the past decade greatly infiltrated the Christian church.

This pagan style of love is NOT what we have just identified. This pagan style of love is jealous, and if provoked to jealous it becomes unkind.

This pagan style of love is full of braggadocio and is highly arrogant. This pagan style of love reveals in virtue signally and personality aggrandizement. Best seen through offering up pithy insights on social media.

People often taking God's name in vain and misrepresenting Christ's character through many different means of self-aggrandizement.

This type of non-Christian love is easily provoke, is easily offended, with regularity fails to overlook personal offense. This type of non-Christian love is juvenile at best and criminal at worst.

This type of non-Christian love fails with daily repetition that's why it must be daily marketed through media, commercials, and through social approval.

Christian love is very powerful, it is life-altering. As we see here in this very passage, this Christian love has **the very power to raise a dead man to life.**

And what needs to be understood by you is one of two things; if you believe in Christ then you must abide in this love and in abiding in this love, you show the lost that they are not abiding in this love.

Too much of Christianity today has **lost both it's salt and it's light.** It has lost both its salt and its light because it has lost the actual power of its love. The Christian faith offers **a love that preserves** and **a love that illumines.**

This love does not love unrighteous, so instead, it identifies unrighteousness. But as John told us 'because men loved darkness rather than Light, for their deeds were evil. Everyone who does evil hates the Light, and does not come to the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed.' John 3:20

That was well known. It was well known to Mary and Martha, to the extent that they would pursue Jesus to solve this problem of sickness.

But when push came to shove, Jesus did not merely show Himself as a friend but a family member.

This is a matter that blood is thicker than water. This is a matter of family business.

**This is a FAMILY!** Martha, Mary, and Lazarus are in turmoil. They are afflicted. They need help.

This is a single family unit that needs Jesus' help. The disciples come along for the trip.

**Q:** How can you demonstrate your love for Christ? That you love one another. **Q:** Who is one another? It is the Christian believers of your actual family and church family.

**1 Cor. 14:1 "Pursue love"** – Go after this, track this down, follow after this pattern of love. Strive for it, push toward it, seek it, search for it.

**As Jesus said,** Ask, seek, and knock and you will find.

In response to this sickness Jesus is going to go back to Judea to address the problem.

**v. 7 'Let us go to Judea again'**

**This is a little bit confusing with names of location,** but Jesus had left Jerusalem in Ch. 10, He had gone to the area of Bethany beyond the Jordan and then returned back to Bethany that is the location just 2 mi. outside of Jerusalem.

At any rate, it takes about two days to travel from the location that Jesus was at beyond the Jordan river to back to Bethany in outside of Jerusalem.

And the disciples are concerned, knowing that the Pharisees want to kill Jesus.

**II. v.8-10 Jesus offers an axiom about life and death.**

**v. 8 'Rabbi, the Jews were just now seeking to stone You, and are You going there again? Jesus answered, "Are there not twelve hours in the day? If anyone walks in the day, he does not stumble, because he sees the light of this world. But if anyone walks in the night he stumbles, because the light is not in him.'**

Jesus gives this axiom about life and death.

**III. v.11 Jesus refers gives a subtle reference to the death of Lazarus**

v. 11 “This He said, and after that He said to them, “Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep; but I go, so that I may awaken him out of sleep”

#### **IV. v.12-13 The Disciples misunderstand Jesus about Lazarus’ death**

v.12-13 ‘The disciples then said to Him, “Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will recover.” Now Jesus had spoken of his death, but they thought that He was speaking of literal sleep.’

Everyone knows when you are sick you need sleep. If you are sick go to bed. Sleep will help you overcome the sickness and restore your strength. That’s a good thing! Why would you wake him up?

They don’t understand.

Of course sleep is used in a number of places in the Bible to illustrate death. Especially as the resurrection accounts are communicated.

#### **V. v.14-15 Jesus is clear and direct about Lazarus’ death.**

v. 14-15 ‘So Jesus then said to them plainly, ‘Lazarus is dead, and I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, so that you may believe; but let us go to him.’”

**Let’s begin passing out communion.**

#### **VI. v. 16 The disciples decide they want to participate in this same death.**

v.16 ‘Therefore Thomas, who is called Didymus, said to his fellow disciples, “Let us also go, so that we may die with Him.”’

**Didymus** – just another name for Thomas, Hebrew name, it means twin. John 20:24 ‘called the Twin’ – he must have had a twin

The trouble for many Christians is they might get an expression of a bible figure and hear one facet of their character and sum them up that way. Thomas could be an example of that.

Thomas’ doubt after the resurrection has even resulted in the moniker, ‘**doubting Thomas.**’ But that is hardly a good synopsis of Thomas’ character.

Here at the break of this story, Thomas expresses the very type of family love we are seeing in this passage.

A family love that is devoted all the way to the end. A family love that is devoted to death.

'let us go and die with Him/Christ'

**In John 14**, Thomas asks Jesus, 'How can we know the way to heaven? and Jesus responds, I am the way, the truth and the life.'

Thomas should not be concluded merely for his evidence requested at the resurrection. Thomas was a devote and committed disciple.

Thomas ended up establishing the first Christian churches in India.

### **The Lord's Supper.**

Death in this life, but Life in Christ.  
Christ died so that we would have life in Him.

1 Cor. 11:27-32

1 Cor. 11:23-26

Pray.

### **Weekly Email**

John 11:5-16 | Afflicted for God's Glory Pt. 2

"In this passage we see the love of Jesus both in addressing the afflictions of Lazarus and his family, with Martha and Mary. We see the reality of death and the truth of life in Christ. We see that Christ loves those who call on Him and this deep love shows itself in a devotion even unto personal death, as Thomas shows in the last verse.'

### **Kid's/Small Group Questions**

1. What is the difference between the love expressed in the beginning of the chapter and the love expressed to this family of Martha, Mary, and Lazarus?
2. What is a Christian family and what is important about love in a Christian family?
3. Friendships are important, but what are some of the differences between the love of friendship and the love of family?
4. What is the axiom Jesus is expressing in v. 9-10 about not stumbling in the day and stumbling at night?
5. Why is Jesus glad that Lazarus would die? So that he could do the miracle of the resurrection and build their faith in Him.
6. Why did Thomas have this response of being will to go and die with Jesus in v. 16?