

# Love, friendship, resurrection

Tim Miller, Gateway Fellowship Feb 5, 2017

**1.) V5 Jesus loved Mary, Martha, and Lazarus, and he called them friends.** Love, friendship, closeness and NOT servitude are characteristic of Bethany. It wasn't just their refreshing him, he was a Bethany for them...

**2.) Jesus raised Laz out of death, rather than keeping him from it.** We all suffer. Being conformed to Christ's likeness isn't really achieved without suffering. It's tied to Paul's prayer in **Phil 3:10-11** "10 that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; 11 in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead."

**In this process we are put in way over our heads.** Beyond the limits of our strength, wisdom, and love. We become dependent upon him out of necessity. We are pushed beyond ourselves into him. And as that happens, **HE becomes our treasure.** Not our beliefs about him. Not our hard work for him. Not our worship of him. HE becomes more precious as we become more dependent upon him. And thus we also ooze — usually unknowingly — more of him to others. Feeling worse but getting better. Looking worse and being more beautiful. Facing ugliness and becoming beautiful. His cross is ugly, but his beauty shines there. Ours is ugly too, and his beauty will shine here as well if we will learn to abide in him.

**3.) 11:33 — Jesus cries tears of sympathy and anger.** 3x in the Scripture we read of Jesus weeping.

- a.) Tears of sorrow over Jerusalem
- b.) Tears of suffering in Gethsemane
- c.) Tears of sympathy in Bethany

Even though he about to raise Laz from death, Jesus weeps. Why? I believe that Jesus is weeping over what death has done to his beloved. Death has stolen and bereaved and taken and oppressed and enslaved....It's WRONG!!! I believe he's angry at death because he is so tender toward his beloved. We don't have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with us in our trials, rather we have a high priest who weeps with us in our tragedies — even though he IS the Resurrection and the Life! In your hour of grief, know this: the Lord isn't high up in heaven, cold, unspeaking, unfeeling, but with a perfect plan only he knows. No. The Lord is with you, the embodiment of compassion, and the Lord FEELS for you. He would never tell us to "weep with those who mourn" without first doing it himself.

**4.) Human expectations did not direct Jesus, abiding in the Father did.** Several times we hear the Lord say, "I said this for their benefit, Father, so they would know." Jesus kept in

internal secret conversation going where he knew Abba always heard him and he knew Abba's constant direction as well. "Abide in me," not "abide in people's expectations." "Abide in me," not, "abide in the values formed in your family of origin." Internal secret conversation with Abba set Jesus' agenda constantly.

**"Lord, your dear friend is sick."** He doesn't come. He delays. And he skips the funeral. He's way late. And when John the Baptist sent a message to Jesus in his hour of need...he doesn't come! He never visited John in prison once. Why is this relevant? Because we often abide in all kinds of yokes that seem morally good, or relationally correct, but aren't from God. Jesus didn't live that way.

**On judgment day the fire will test the quality of each person's work** and all that isn't divine — wood, hay, stubble — will simply burn and be revealed as a waste of our lives. Human wisdom is wood. Ego farming is hay. Human need is stubble.

**Human wisdom, human ego farming, human need.** Wood, hay, stubble. This is so much of what passes for ministry, so much of what passes for kingdom, so much of what activates churches and leaders...and so much of why religious people like me ended up killing Jesus. Because the gold confronts the wood, hay, and stubble. It confronts it by not submitting to it.

**Ishmael was Abraham's and Sarah's answer** to how the promise will be fulfilled. Isaac is God's. And what we do for God in the flesh will always end up in hostility to what God does by the Spirit.

Christ himself said, "On my own, I can do nothing." He was abiding in the Father, and the Spirit worked through him. He would teach us to abide. His delay and bucking human expectations reveals how deeply he was abiding...this leads to the next point...

**5.) The forgotten beatitude. "Blessed is the one who is not offended because of me."**  
**Matthew 11:6.**

"Lord, if only you had been there!" Both Mary and Martha say this to Jesus. How many times have I felt exactly the same, "Lord, if you would have walked into that room...everything would be different now. And I don't understand."

### **Why we're offended by Jesus**

- a.) He demands too much — costly
- b.) He doesn't meet our expectations — disappointment
- c.) He shows up late — resurrection instead of protection

**6.) Jesus is FREEDOM to captives.** 11:44 "untie him and let him go." Death is powerful. Jesus is Almighty. With three little words he strips death of its prize. "Lazarus, come forth."

We don't get free alone. Jesus instructs the others to unbind Laz. Only Jesus can give life, but we have a part to play in people's freedom. And people have a part to play in our freedom. We unbind each other and let each other go. We let others unbind us and let us go. The gospel is freedom. Church is a people founded on and moving toward freedom. But so much of the time I hear the Lord saying 11:11 — "my dear one is asleep - I go to wake him up," and so much of the time I hear the Lord saying 11:44 "unbind him and let him go."

It is for freedom that Christ has set us free (Gal 5:1), but we too often are bound by pain, shame, sin, rejection, unforgiveness, broken identity, false gods, false limitations, lies from the past, fears for the future....tossed to and fro. No wonder Jesus weeps — 11:33!!! We are made for freedom! 10:10!!!!