

2nd April sermon notes John chapter 11 v1-45

With a long passage there is the temptation for the preacher to try and explain everything and the great danger is that it becomes more of a theological lecture, and the preacher gets into the complexities of the passage.

Trying to explain every little significance.

Right from the outset there's a sense of **urgency** and **importance** to this story. The delay caused by Jesus not getting immediately creates further tension in the story, and the complete lack of understanding by the disciples as to what Jesus is about adds a layer of frustration.

But both Mary and Martha have glimpsed the glory of God in the life of Jesus when they say to him separately: *"Lord, if only you had been here, my brother would not have died."*

And so the mighty miracle of Jesus raising Lazarus from death happens and many people believe, they catch a glimpse of God at work in and through the life of Jesus.

you know what I like most about this story? It's the shortest verse of the Bible: *"Jesus wept."* (John 11:35)

We have all lived through the death of a loved one.

We have all ached when someone we dearly love has passed away.

We have all wondered about what comes next, and fretted about our own death.

In this, we find Jesus dealing with those experiences. He does not just show it; he gives it.

What he gives is freedom given through love. New life is given, when death and sin are conquered.

Jesus certainly loved Lazarus and his family. When Mary and Martha first came to tell Jesus

about their brother's illness, they did it by telling Jesus, "Lord, your dear friend is ill

The story tells us about the close bond he had with the whole family. Jesus loved Lazarus.

John (11:5), writes: *"Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus."* Jesus loved them.

Jesus' love for that family was not just a matter of words.

Not a kind of polite sentiment, that we sometimes express concerning acquaintances.

This was a passionate love.

After learning that Lazarus was severely ill, Jesus finished his business of preaching and teaching across the river Jordan and he went back to Bethany in Judea to be with his friends.

He loved Lazarus and his sisters so much that he changed his plans for them.

How much do we change our plans for our loved ones?

In fact, Jesus loved them so much that he was willing to put himself in danger for Lazarus, because the disciples thought it would be better for Jesus to stay away Lazarus' home town.

But Jesus did not consider the risk; he loved Lazarus so much. Then when Jesus learned from Lazarus' sisters that Lazarus was dead, and when he saw Mary and all of the friends of Lazarus crying, Jesus was troubled. When he saw where they had laid Lazarus' body, **even Jesus wept.**

The tears he cried must have been genuine, not just polite tears. For the people who were around the tomb, who saw him cry, responded: *"See how much he loved him"*

Yes, Jesus really knows what it is to grieve over the loss of someone you love. God really understands us.

He has lived through our trials. **Jesus wept**

In the midst of one of the most amazing stories of the Bible, as we experience more and more the vision of God amongst us, we see most humbly and meekly the human face of Jesus.

There is so much that wrenches the heart in those two simple words.

Two words that conjure up such compassion, such sympathy, such kindness.

- That he feels those emotions for Lazarus.
- That he feels those emotions for our lives.

We serve a mighty and majestic God, whose mind we cannot fathom,
whose heart we cannot comprehend.

Our God is at once both so uniquely divine, and yet so utterly human.

Just when we think his love is so far out of our reach he stoops so tenderly to embrace and hold us.

This is quite extraordinary, love so amazing, so divine.