

Sermon Follow-up | October 10, 2020
Fix Your Eyes On Jesus: "He Whom You Love is Ill"
Focus Passage: John 11:1-6, 17, 20-27, 32-44

Sermon Recap: May the strange way of God's healing become familiar to us and the familiar struggles we face become strange.

The Strange Ways of God's Healing

God's love is not designed to meet our expectations. Jesus loves Martha, Mary, and Lazarus, but when he hears that Lazarus is sick he stays two days longer where he is (v.5-6). His love is designed to refine us, teach us to trust him, deepen our faith, and expose our idols. (Micah 3 says that the Messiah will be like a refiners fire.) The strange ways of God's healing is slower than we would want or expect. Jesus' healing of Lazarus comes when there is no doubt that he is dead (v.17). Jesus waits until the only explanation can be his healing, power and touch.

God's healing is not only a promise for the future, but a person in the present.

(V.21-26) When Jesus comes he waits for Martha to come to him. Martha states that if Jesus had only been there things would be different. And then she says that since she believes in Jesus, she will hold on hope to a later date of healing. As we are sick, our relationships falter, a loved one dies: God's healing is not only a promise but His healing is present with us now to heal us of our deepest pain.

Our pain, pains God

(V.33-38) Mary says the same thing as her sister and begins to weep. And Jesus was deeply moved and wept. And God's love was beyond their expectations. As God sees us in pain, he grieves seeing us suffer for the pain of our own sin and rebellion. In spite of us rejecting him and not remaining faithful to Him, our pain still pains God.

So why does Jesus weep even knowing that He is about to raise Lazarus back to life? Jesus knew that by raising Lazarus to life He was condemning Himself to death. Our pain, pains God to the point that He himself would take the grave in our place.

Group Gathering

Group Check-in — Care, Celebration, Encouragement (About 1/3 of meeting time)

1. Informal conversation to allow individuals to catch up with one another.
2. Ask everyone how it went as they tried to obey what they sensed God saying to them through last weeks' time together.

Allow the Word to Speak — Be Hearers of the Word (About 1/3 of meeting time)

READ John 11:1-6, 17, 20-27, 32-44

1. In verse 6 Jesus heard that Lazarus was ill and decided to stay in the place where he was for two additional days. How does this speak about the love that Jesus has for us?
2. Multiple times in this passage we see a proclamation of "had you been here things would be different." Where else in scripture do we see a similar claim of placing the blame on God?
3. Verse 35 shows us an image of Jesus weeping. Where else in scripture do we see Jesus showing emotion? What does this say about emotion in general?
4. In verses 33 and 38 Jesus is "deeply moved." What is the underlying reason for Jesus being deeply moved?

Put the Word into Practice — Be Doers of the Word (About 1/3 of meeting time)

1. Have there been times when your expectations of God have not been met? How have you responded? What have you learned through this experience?
2. Has there been a time when you have grieved or been in sin where God provided grace/mercy on you? How could you use this experience to share the good news of Jesus with someone in your life?
3. What illness are you suffering from in which you may need to call out to Jesus for healing?
4. In asking for healing we need to be willing to do what God asks of us. What “tombs” and dark regions of our lives have we not let Jesus speak into?

The Big Question: What do you sense God's Spirit saying to you and what concrete action will you take in response? Share your answer with the group.