

## **King of Love (John 11)**

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**Dominant Thought: Jesus, our loving King, comes to us in our grief and raises us to life in Him for God's glory.**

**Objectives:**

**I want my listeners to see how Jesus loves us.**

**I want my listeners to believe in the life Jesus offers.**

**I want my listeners to walk through grief with Jesus.**

Today, I want to introduce you or reintroduce you to Jesus, our loving King. In John 11, we will see Jesus loving some of His dear friends. We will see Jesus cry and get upset. We will see Jesus speak truth such as, "I am the resurrection and the life." We will see Jesus raise His good friend Lazarus from the dead. I hope we will meet Him either for the first time or meet Him again. Jesus is our loving King.

The sermon in a sentence today is: **Jesus, our loving King, comes to us in our grief and raises us to life in Him for God's glory.** In our time together, we'll unpack that sentence phrase by phrase as we move through John 11.

**Jesus, our loving King...(John 11.1-5, 36).**

Our leaders have studied over the past year what it looks like to be a disciple of Jesus. Some of the words that I've been reflecting on recently are the four B's: Belong, Believe, Become, and Bless. As we walk through this story, we'll bump into examples of the B's. To belong means you have a relationship with Jesus. As Christians, you belong to a church family. People are looking for a group to belong to. Belonging also describes healthy family relationships.

Three different times in John 11 we read Jesus loves this family. In John 11.3, speaking about Lazarus, "Lord, the one you love is sick." In John 11.5, "Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus." Then, in John

11.36, reflecting on the tears of Jesus at the tomb of Lazarus, “See how he loved him!”

We serve a loving king who wants to have a relationship with us. Our loving king wants to lead our families and His bride, the church.

I find comfort that Jesus has friends.

Grant Osborne and others wrote:

### **John, 1 John, 2 John, & 3 John Commentary**

This is a beautiful story, not just about Jesus’ power to raise the dead, but also about the loving relationship Jesus had with his friends.

As we move through the story, we’ll see Jesus’ love in action: He’ll come to this family about a day’s walk, He’ll visit, He’ll make a promise, He’ll cry, He’ll get upset in the face of death, and He’ll raise Lazarus from the grave.

Do you need to take steps closer to belong to our loving King and His bride, the church? Does the love of Jesus need to reign more in your families? We serve a loving King.

### **Jesus, our loving King, comes to us in our grief...(John 11.5-23, 26-38).**

Jesus waits two days. Why?

At that time they were told that Lazarus had been in the grave for four days (the Jews usually buried a person the same day he died). This was significant and possibly a major reason why Jesus waited for two days before leaving (11:6). The rabbis believed that the soul lingered near the grave for three days, hoping to re-enter the body, but as decomposition became evident, the soul would depart (Leviticus Rabbah 18:1; Ecclesiastes Rabbah 12:6).

Osborne, G., Philip W. Comfort. (2007). Cornerstone biblical commentary, Vol 13: John and 1, 2, and 3 John (p. 169). Tyndale House Publishers.

After telling the disciples that Lazarus is dead, He then says, “for your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him” (John 11.15). Thomas then declares, “Let us also go, that we may die with him” (John 11.16).

Many Jews had come to Martha and Mary to comfort them in the loss of their brother (John 11.19). Many would call this the ministry of presence. One of the more caring actions you can give to someone who is grieving is your presence. You do not need to explain anything or give a one-line cliché. They need your presence. And for followers of Jesus, when we show up then Jesus is with us.

Jesus meets us in our grief. Both sisters greet Jesus, “Lord if you had been here my brother would not have died” (John 11.21, 32).

When we meet Mary, the one who will pour perfume on the Lord and wipe His feet with her hair (John 11.2; 12.3), she gets up quickly to meet Jesus. The Jews follow Mary thinking she’s going to the tomb to “mourn” (John 11.21). In John 11.33, “Jesus saw her weeping.”

In John 11.33-38, we see the emotions of Jesus. He is deeply moved in spirit and troubled. “Deeply moved” could mean “indignant, be inwardly angry”. (For more information see G.R. Beasley-Murray, *John*, p. 192-193). It could also mean the snort of a disgruntled horse. Why is Jesus angry? He could be angry that Mary and those with her are grieving like those who have no hope (Beasley-Murray’s view based on 1 Thessalonians 4.13). Jesus could be upset because of the effects of sin that bring death. Death is not the end goal of life. It wasn’t intended to be like this.

Jesus meets us in our grief. It is in our grief that Jesus can grow us to **become** better followers of Him. We can help others in their grief. We draw closer to Him. Tim Keller said, “If faced rightly, suffering can drive you like a nail deep into the love of God.”

I ran across an email that shared the following:

Albert Camus exhorted us to *"live to the point of tears."* If you want your heart back, you have to get your tears back.

Dacher Keltner, Professor of Psychology at UC Berkley, points out that there are really 3 kinds of tears. He notes:

*"The **first** is the near-continuous watering of the surface of the eye produced by the lacrimal gland just above and behind the cornea. This kind of tearing smooths out the rough surface of the cornea so that you can see the world more clearly."*

*A **second** kind of tear arises in response to physical events—chopping onions, thick smoke, a gnat flying into your eye, a poke to the eye when roughhousing with kids. It is produced by the same anatomy as the first kind of tear but is a response to a physical event.*

*The **third** kind of tears are tears of emotion, when the lacrimal gland is activated by a region of your nervous system that includes the vagus nerve. The vagus nerve wanders from the top of your spinal cord through your facial and vocal muscles and then through your lungs, heart, and intestinal wall, communicating with the flora and fauna of your gut. It slows your heart rate, calms the body, and through enabling eye contact and vocalization can bring about a sense of connection and belonging."*

Functional tears, utility tears, and emotional tears. Some theological traditions call these tears *sacred tears*.

**Jesus, our loving King, comes to us in our grief and raises us to life in Him...(John 11.23-27, 38-44).**

If we back up, we listen in on a conversation between Martha and Jesus as He arrives. In John 11.23, the first words Jesus says to Martha are, "Your brother will rise again." Martha agrees, "I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day" (John 11.24).

The Jesus gives another declarative I am statement in the gospel of John. "I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; and whoever lives by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this?" (John 11.25-26).

Earlier in John, Jesus said, "I am the bread of life" (John 6.35, 48). In John 10, He shared, "I am the gate for the sheep" (John 10.7) and "I am the good shepherd" (John 10.11). Now, "I am the resurrection and the life." You'll find a couple more as you continue reading John. In describing His name and identity, Jesus says, "I am the resurrection and the life."

Through these signs in the gospel, the power and majesty have been building. In John 2, Jesus turned water into wine and cleansed the temple. In John 4, Jesus heals the official's son who is dying. In John 5, Jesus heals a lame man. In John 6, Jesus feeds thousands with a few little loaves and couple little fish. In John 9, He healed a man born blind. And now, will He raise the dead?

He describes Himself to Martha and states “those who believe in me will live, even though they die; and whoever lives by believing in me will never die” (John 11.25-26). To believe is more than to mentally agree about Jesus. It is to trust in Jesus and keep trusting in Him as the King of love and life.

Then, Jesus asks Martha the question that echoes through the ages, “Do you believe this?” (John 11.26). One of the marks of a growing disciple is to Believe. Do you believe in Jesus as your Lord/King and Savior. Do you trust Him? It’s like saying, “I do at a wedding.” There’s no middle ground. Yes or no. No neutral ground. Then, Martha declares, “I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, who is come into the world” (John 11.27).

Martha declares what the people shouted on the first Palm Sunday as Jesus entered Jerusalem.

Psalm 118:26, “Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. From the house of the Lord we bless you.”

Martha, answered Jesus’ question, “Do you believe this?” with an affirming, “Yes!”

In September of 2012, I came into my study at church and there was a post-it note similar to the one I’m holding now. On it was the writing of a nine-year-old girl. She wrote, “Dad, pray that I will be able to say yes.” Beth and I were talking with our daughter, Grace, who was 9 years old at the time. She had finished her JAM booklet in preparation for baptism. She was nervous to be in front of the church the next Sunday to be baptized. Her simple prayer serves as a good reminder to all of us, “Jesus, help me say, yes!” When we believe in Jesus, we say yes.

Later on, Jesus comes to the tomb and weeps there. [Read John 11.38-44.] Then, He calls out, “Take away the stone” (John 11.39). Martha reminds Jesus that it has been four days. By this time there will be a bad odor. He reminds, “Didn’t I tell you that if you believe, you will see the glory of God?” (John 11.40).

Then, Jesus looks up and prays, “Father, thank you that you have heard me. I knew that you always hear me, but I said this for the benefit of the people standing here, that they may believe that you sent me” (John 11.42). Nine times in John 11, we read some form of “believe.”

Jesus calls out in a loud voice, “Lazarus, come out!” (John 11.43). He’s wrapped up like a mummy which foreshadows how Jesus would be wrapped up at His own burial. Imagine looking at that cave of shadows and the mummy/zombie like man comes shuffling out. Jesus then says, “Take off the grave clothes and let him go”(John 11.44). I wonder who volunteered for that job?

For those who believe in Jesus, eternal life is now in session. “Whoever lives by believing in me will never die” (John 11.26).

**Jesus, our loving King, comes to us in our grief and raises us to life in Him for God’s glory (John 11.4, 40, 45-53).**

This story begins with Jesus saying, “This sickness will not end in death. No, it is for God’s glory so that God’s Son may be glorified through it” (John 11.4). He reminds Martha, “Didn’t I tell you that if you believe, you will see the glory of God?” (John 11.40).

Again, Grant Osborne and others share:

**John, 1 John, 2 John, & 3 John The Death of Lazarus (11:1–16)**

The glory of God was the major goal of Jesus’ life, and everything he did was meant to bring his Father glory (12:28; 14:13; 17:1, 4).

The glory of God is the weighty/heavy presence of God. You would hope that many would be excited about this new life restored, but again Jesus faces opposition.

Read John 11.45-53.

In giving Lazarus back his life, Jesus set in motion the motivation for the Jewish leaders to take His life. The leaders would arrest, try, and get a conviction against Jesus. On today, the Palm Sunday, Jesus rides into Jerusalem amid shouts of, “Hosanna! Lord, save us.” Then, come Friday, “Crucify! Crucify!”

Caiaphas said, “It is better that one man die for the people than that the whole nation perish” (John 11.50). We’ve seen this language earlier in John’s gospel. John 3.16, “For God so loved the world, that He gave His one and only Son so that whoever believes in Him will not perish, but have eternal life.” Because Jesus is our loving King, He takes our place.

Before we embrace the crown of glory, we must pick up the cross of Christ.

John 1.14, “The Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us. We have seen His glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.”

**Jesus, our loving King, comes to us in our grief and raises us to life in Him for God’s glory.**