

Questions for reflection, application, and discussion

1. John 11:5-6 tells us that after Jesus heard about Lazarus' sickness he waited two days to leave. It also tells us that the reason he waited was because he loved Martha, Mary, and Lazarus.
 - a. How was Jesus' waiting an expression of his love toward this family?
 - b. Both Mary and Martha told Jesus, "if you had been here my brother would not have died." How do you think they felt about Jesus' delay in coming?
 - c. How has God at times expressed his love toward you in confusing ways. How have you responded to him in those times?

2. To raise Lazarus from the dead, Jesus first had to have the stone blocking the entrance to the tomb moved away. But when Jesus instructed that the stone should be moved, Martha objected, pointing out that removing the stone would expose everyone to the stink of decay.
 - a. Juli said that in the same way we can resist God's healing power because we fear the exposure of what stinks about what is dead or broken in our lives. What is your initial reaction to this analogy?
 - b. Can our fear and shame of being exposed keep us from allowing God to roll away the stone of deep wounds, and prevent him from healing those wounds? Explain your answer.
 - c. Are there times in your past that you allowed God to roll away the stone covering your past wounds, even at the risk of exposing the stink of what was dead or broken in your life? What happened?
 - d. Are there wounds in your life that you are hiding? What is keeping you from taking the risk of allowing Jesus to roll away the stone?

3. John 11:44 tells us that after Jesus called Lazarus from the grave, raising him from the dead, Lazarus came out still bound by his death clothes. Juli taught that in the same way when we experience God's resurrection power in our lives God gives us new life, but at first, we still have on our own 'death clothes' of our past.
 - a. Practically how does this illustration play out in life? How does God give us new life, and how is that new life contrasted with the old death clothes that we need to remove?
 - b. How can we as a church error in not being gracious in loving new believers who still have death clothes from their past? How can we as a church error in failing to ever help people remove those old death clothes after they chose to follow Jesus?
 - c. Juli pointed out that Jesus didn't call Lazarus to remove the death clothes that covered him, but he instructed others in the community to help Lazarus by taking them off him. What is the practical significance and application of this image in our lives?