

Questions for reflection, application, and discussion

1. After telling us in verse 5, "Now Jesus loved Martha and his sister and Lazarus," John continues in verse 6, "so when he heard that Lazarus was ill, he stayed two days longer..." John clearly presents Jesus' decision to stay after receiving the message of Lazarus' illness as an expression of his love for the family.
  - a. How was waiting for 2 days after receiving this urgent message an expression of Jesus' love for Martha, Mary, and Lazarus?
  - b. Can you relate to this story personally? Have there been times when you have urgently cried out to God, and it felt as if he was absent? Did that feel like an expression of God's love for you? Was it an expression of God's love for you? Explain your answers.
2. When we face a major crisis in our lives, it is natural to ask why? Why would a good and loving God allow death, and disease, and abuse, and other crises? What does this passage and Pastor Mike's message teach about how we deal with this question in these times of crisis?
3. When Jesus finally went to Lazarus' house, Lazarus had died and been in the tomb for 4 days. Both Martha and Mary greeted Jesus by saying, "*Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.*" The tone of their words suggest faith combined with a degree of confusion, and perhaps even accusation.
  - a. What do you think these women felt? Do think they had reason to question Jesus' love? Was it wrong for them to do so?
  - b. Both women expressed confusion and/or accusation, but in both cases, this was part of their ultimate expression of faith. Most would see confusion and/or accusation as being incompatible with faith; why is that not the case here?
  - c. Are there times when you've felt angry at God, or confused or hurt by his seeming lack of action? What do we learn from this passage regarding how we should deal with these periods in our life?
4. John 11:35 tells us that when Jesus went to Lazarus' tomb and stood with Mary and Martha in their grief, he wept. Why did Jesus weep when he knew what he was about to do? What does he weeping teach us about Jesus?
5. In his message Pastor Mike said that Jesus primarily uses his people to communicate his empathy and compassion to us in our times of crisis and loss. What does he mean by this? Practically, what should this look like for our church? What should it look like for you?
6. John 11:33 tells us that when Jesus saw Mary and her friends weeping over Lazarus' death, "*he was deeply moved in his spirit and greatly troubled.*" The words used to describe Jesus' emotion are strong words that usually describe not only distress, but also anger.
  - a. What about Lazarus' death and seeing his family and friends mourn his death caused an emotional response in Jesus that included distress and anger?
  - b. What is the connection between Jesus' anger and distress at Lazarus' death and his own death on the cross?