

Faith That Knows No Limitations

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[0 : 00] John chapter 11, verse 17 through 37, if you would please stand with me as we honor the reading of God's word together.

! Now when Jesus came, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days. Bethany was near Jerusalem, about two miles off, and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them concerning their brother.

So when Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, but Mary remained seated in the house. Martha said to Jesus, Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.

But even now I know that whatever you ask from God, God will give you. Jesus said to her, your brother will rise again.

Martha said to him, I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day. Jesus said to her, I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die.

[1 : 27] Do you believe this? She said to him, yes, Lord. I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who is coming into the world. When he had said this, she went and called her sister Mary, saying in private, the teacher is here and is calling for you.

And when she heard it, she rose quickly and went to him. Now Jesus had not yet come into the village, but was still in the place where Martha had met him. When the Jews who were with her in the house, consoling her, saw Mary rise quickly and go out, they followed her, supposing that she was going to the tomb to weep there.

Now when Mary came to where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet, saying to him, Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. When Jesus saw her weeping and the Jews who had come with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in his spirit and greatly troubled.

And he said, where have you laid him? They said to him, Lord, come and see. Jesus wept. So the Jews said, see how he loved him.

But some of them said, could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man also have kept this man from dying? May God add a blessing to the reading of his word. Would you please be seated?

[2 : 47] And I want to pray. Lord God, we pray that right now, having heard your word, that we would have ears to hear and eyes to see what your spirit has to reveal to us through this passage.

Lord, that you are a holy God, that you are a mighty God, and that our faith in you should be great because great you are. And we ask this in Jesus' name.

Amen. Amen. In Exodus chapter 3, God appears to Moses in the burning bush. And Moses is in his 80s.

He's a fugitive living in exile, and he's shepherding the sheep of his father-in-law. If you recall, he was the grandson of Pharaoh.

But later, when he sees an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, he steps in and he kills that Egyptian in a fit of rage. And then for 40 years, 40 years he lived in exile.

[3 : 57] He lived on the run. And I think at this point in Moses' life, Egypt was probably the last place he ever thought he would go to again, and probably the last place he would ever want to be.

But God has heard the cries of his people in Egypt, and he chooses Moses to be the one, to be the man through whom God will set his people free.

And so Moses, minding his business, doing his job, all of a sudden sees God appear in the burning bush, and God calls out to him from it and tells Moses what he intends to do through him.

What was Moses' response? Do you remember? What took so long? God, I've been waiting for this time. I've been hoping for the opportunity to be used by you to go back to Egypt.

I'm really thrilled by this. And you couldn't have picked a better man for the job. Not at all. Not at all. Moses' response is, Who am I?

[5 : 15] Who am I? And then he asks a series of what-if kinds of questions, expressing his awareness of his own limitations, his lack to be a good leader, his speech, which is ineloquent and uninspiring.

And he's telling God, No one is going to listen to me. No one is going to want to follow me. And so he pleads with God to send someone else. Anyone else but him.

Moses is fixated on himself and his own limitations. But God informs him that though, yes, Moses is limited, God himself is not.

One of the most awesome scenes then in Scripture occurs in this passage when God reveals to Moses his name. Moses' insufficiency was no matter to a God who is all-sufficient as expressed through his revelation of his name to Moses when he says, I am who I am or I am that I am.

And there God is talking about his aseity, his dependence upon nothing to exist.

[6 : 48] He self-exists. Therefore, he's totally self-sufficient. He is all-powerful. He is all-knowing. He is all-present. God is not like us.

God is not contingent upon anyone. We are. Suck the oxygen out of this building and we will die. You can trace your existence back to and through history to Adam and Eve.

And you can see there that they have their beginning in God. God has no beginning. God is and has been and always will be. And he's telling Moses that. And he's saying, and you know what, as a matter of fact, Pharaoh might be popular but I don't need his cooperation to do what I want to do. Nor does he need Moses to be someone that he isn't. If God wants to use an old, stuttering, fugitive, orphan, shepherd, he will despite the limitations that he has.

And whatever God wills to do, it will come to pass. The one who is completely self-sufficient, who self-exists, who comes down to redeem a people from their suffering is unmatched and he is unstoppable.

[8 : 08] Moses' little faith in that moment would grow greatly as he learned and as he saw God at work to fulfill his promises.

he learned that the one whom he served could not be bound by the human limitations that he himself experienced.

And so the Exodus is this extraordinary event in Scripture that points us with the rest of Scripture to a time when God would send a greater deliverer to free his people from a greater kind of suffering. God the Father would send his eternal Son to save sinners. The eternal Son of God added humanity to his deity to accomplish this great mission.

But it included for a time some self-imposed limitations. Philippians 2 5-8 talks about that very thing.

[9 : 25] There Paul encouraging the church to be like Christ says, have this mind among yourselves which is yours in Christ Jesus who though he was in the form of God from eternity past did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped but he emptied himself by taking the form of a servant being born in the likeness of men and being found in human form he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death even death on a cross.

Jesus' incarnation his emptying of himself was not an emptying of his deity but a renouncing of his heavenly privileges and while his divinity was not diminished the addition of his human nature meant that like us he knew he knew the limitations of being tired he knew the limitation of being hungry of being thirsty sharing in all the things that it means to be truly human excluding sin he was fully man he is fully man he is fully God but at this point in John 11 in Jesus' ministry no one doubted the genuineness of his humanity it was his deity that they questioned but time and again Jesus demonstrated that he was not a mere man John to this point has recorded six miracles in his gospel in which

Jesus demonstrated his divinity his deity he turned the water into wine he multiplied the loaves and the fish he walked on water he cured the man who was born blind he healed the official son and soon as we'll see he raised Lazarus who was dead for four days back to life all the while people expressed doubt about his true identity and how his miracles were accomplished the Pharisees attributed them to Satan others said that well he's a prophet he's a good teacher but some believed that he was is the son of God yet still the belief of the believers was often limited it was often small Matthew records five instances where Jesus rebuked those who believed in him for their little faith and in four of those five times it's the twelve disciples who are the ones who are being rebuked for

the little faith that they are having and expressing in Christ and so in this text we encounter the sisters of Lazarus who like the disciples believe but express faith in Jesus that was little because it was being diminished by two attitudes and you know these are attitudes that are present within us these are attitudes that are present within me they are attitudes that express little faith and a God who we should give all of our allegiance to and have total faith in we remember John wrote this book inspired by the Holy Spirit for a reason that reason was that we would believe and have faith he records it in John 20 verse 30 31 now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples which are not written in this book but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God and that by believing you may have life in his name

John wrote to convince people that Jesus is the Messiah he wrote to convince his readers of Jesus true identity as the incarnate God man whose divine and human natures were perfectly united into one person his gospel also though serves to strengthen the faith of those who already know that Jesus is Messiah we study and we read the Bible so that we will remain faithful and that the Lord will increase our faith and our confidence that in Christ we have life that through Christ we have a relationship with God and the strength of a relationship depends upon trust God wants you to trust him

[14 : 36] God wants you to trust him God wants you to not limit him based on your own understanding of things God wants you to trust him totally absolutely in all things at all times God wants you to trust him he wants you to trust what he has done and he wants you to trust what he is still capable of doing right now in your life and you know as a church Jesus hasn't come back yet and so to me that indicates that we still have a lot for him to do through us he is still at work in his church through the great commission to go and make disciples and so I believe that still today the Lord desires to use his church and he will use a church tremendously that refuses to place limitations on him that's the kind of church

God will use in a mighty way but what will it take for us to be that kind of church Ephesians 3 14 through 21 take a look at this for this reason I bow my knees before the father from whom every family on heaven and on earth is named that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his spirit in your inner being so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith that you being rooted and grounded in love may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and the length and the height and the depth and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge that you may be filled with all the fullness of God now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all we ask or think according to the power at work within us to him be glory in the church and in Christ

Jesus throughout all generations forever and ever amen we cannot quench the spirit of God at work within us by having little faith in a God who asks us to be completely faithful and trusting in him I want our church to be that kind of church when our faith is strong in Christ our love for him and one another will testify to a dying world of a supernatural love that displays the reality of God's greatness God's fullness God's holiness and God's truthfulness when these conditions are met when God's people are faithful to him when God's people do not limit him God works in a mighty and powerful way through them that unbelievers will see how great our God is as believers we cannot limit our great

God I want our church to be that kind of church do you I didn't hear many amens there I know you though and I believe that you do I believe that you do and so the Lord has a lesson for us all to learn today that I think will lead us to being that kind of church that kind of church that God uses in ways that make much of his great name and so it's a lesson on putting to death the attitudes that limit our faith in what Jesus who overcomes death can do so the main idea for this morning sermon is this don't place limitations on what Christ can do don't place limitations on what

Christ can do don't place limitations on what the triune God can do the Father the Son and the Holy Spirit and so there are two attitudes again that we often as believers express that limit faith in God's ability and must be put to death by us if we want to see the Lord at work in our lives and in our church in ways that are amazing and astounding and that glorify Him and so the first attitude that we have to put to death comes in verses 17 through 27 don't place limitations on Christ with an attitude that says it's too late don't place limitations on Christ with an attitude that says it's too late look at your Bible again in verse 17 through 19 now when

[20 : 20] Jesus came he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days Bethany was near Jerusalem about two miles off and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them concerning their brother and so remember from last week we know that and we see from our text Lazarus has been dead for a while for four days as Jesus was hearing about his illness Lazarus was either dead or was about to die imminently and we know that Jesus knew all of this if we recall from last week we know in our suffering that Jesus knows Jesus loves us he's in control and he will ultimately be glorified in our suffering and so Jesus didn't prolong his stay to to prolong Lazarus his sufferings but to demonstrate his glory to demonstrate his ability to reveal again that he is the son of God whom death is no match for that people who believe in have life through his name and so when Jesus arrives again Lazarus has been in the tomb dead for four days and I think it's interesting that John includes that detail because there was a Jewish myth that existed around this point in time that said that the soul lingers hovers over the body that it has departed from wanting to reenter it wanting to go back in but on the fourth day the body starts to show signs of decomposing and so the spirit leaves and so there's this thought that would have existed among many of them Jews that of those Jews that Lazarus here in the first three days was mostly dead not totally dead which made me think about that great scene in

The Princess Bride remember if you've seen that movie where Fezzik the giant Inigo Montoya you killed my father prepare to die take the tortured Wesley to Miracle Max played by Billy Crystal and they bring him to Miracle Max and they say they think that he is dead and Miracle Max says oh no it only so happens that your friend is mostly dead mostly dead there's a big difference between all dead and mostly dead okay Lazarus on day four is all dead all dead not mostly dead all dead and totally dead so Jesus arrives look at verse 20 when Martha heard that he was coming she went and met him but Mary remained seated in the house Martha said to Jesus Lord if you had been here my brother would not have died but even now I know that whatever you ask from God God will give to you

Jesus said to her your brother will rise again Martha said to him I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day so let's unpack what is going on right here in this conversation Martha's reaction to Jesus is not unlike the attitude that many of Jesus followers still have today it wasn't that she distrusted Jesus but that she was unwilling to kill the questions in her mind that were troubling her keeping her focus on the past and what had happened she was stuck asking the questions how why and what if in her mind

Jesus was too late what had happened could not be undone such limited faith expresses doubt in what God can do and we scale down his promises and his ability based upon our own understanding Martha believed that Jesus could have done something but she believed that what he could have done it would have had to have happened four days before you could have done something at one point in time Lord but now it's too late the final nail has been driven into the coffin she believed she had some faith that

[25 : 45] Jesus could heal a deathly ill person and that takes faith but she didn't believe she didn't have faith in this moment that Jesus could bring a dead man back to life now it's true if you look at verse 22 that it says there Martha says to Jesus I know whatever you ask from God God will give you but we know that her whatever did not include resurrection because when we jump forward to verse 39 when Jesus orders the stone of Lazarus tomb to be removed she quickly rebukes him for that action look at verse 39 Jesus said take away the stone Martha the sister of the dead man said to him Lord by this time there will be an odor for he has been dead for four days she has faith she trusts but there's limitations based upon her own understanding and again she expresses the thought that it's too late and in doing so she limits

Jesus ability to a place saying Lord if you had been here if you had been here so again we see her little faith in the fact that she thought Jesus had to physically be there if he was going to heal Lazarus and it would have had to have been four days ago there but we've read scripture if you've read scripture you know that Jesus isn't contained like that we know the faith of the centurion for who says Lord you just give the word you don't have to be there and I know that you will heal him my servant he was not limited Christ was not limited spatially his power was not limited by his present physical location and so Jesus said to her in verse 23 and 24 your brother will rise again but Martha said to him I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day on the last day and in that answer in that statement once again

Martha expresses a limited view of Jesus and what he can do while it's too late in her mind in the present for Jesus to do something now here she puts off what Jesus is capable of doing to the future what he will do one day we do the same thing today don't we we believe that Jesus is able to do all that he says that he will do but if we're honest with ourselves a lot of time what we think is he'll do it I know that he will heaven is my home but right here and right now I'm not expecting much I've seen what he's done I've experienced what he's done in my life in the past I know what he'll do for me in the future but right now the way that we act and the way that we live and the way that we pray indicates that we don't expect

Jesus to be at work much in the present Martha should have been overcome by Jesus words here your brother will rise again she should have taken his words literally but it was too late in her mind it's just too late Lord nothing can be done now and so she pushed his present promise off into the future do you do the same do you do the same I do the same I've been guilty of doing that more times than I know you've probably done the same you see the Lord at work in other people people that you know you see the

Lord at work in other churches churches filled with people that you know you see the Lord at work in other people's lives but you limit what you think he's able to do in you through you right here and right now putting it off to a later date and a later time one day Lord just not right now expressing faith in what God has done in the past trusting in what God will do in the future but presently living without expectation and acting as if God is not interested in doing anything in and through us right now and that creates a faith that is lethargic and a church that is lethargic way down

[31 : 41] Christians who are way down because they lean too much on their own understanding and are blinded by what God is able to do right now and wants to do right now in their present thinking about this made me recall a couple of sisters some time ago they were members of a large family and the older sister of that family and another sister were members of our church and I remember hearing their testimony the older sister would tell me about how she drove to church at least once maybe twice by herself when she first came she'd been a member of the church for a long time but she got out of her car and she started to walk to the church and she came around and she went right back to her car

God kept putting her in that car kept bringing her to that church until finally she entered and she was saved and then her sister and they had seven other siblings and they would tell me about how they would together pray fervently passionately for the salvation of their siblings and they believed that God is sovereign in salvation but they knew that God works through us sharing the gospel and through our prayers and I'll tell you that six out of the seven came to faith in Jesus Christ there was one left a brother and they would tell me a lot about that brother and I knew that they were praying passionately for that brother I know that they would share the gospel with that brother one sister would share the gospel with them the other sister would share the gospel with them both sisters would share the gospel with them the whole family would and I remember that Sunday when their brother by God's grace was saved through faith in Jesus

Christ and you know what his question or his thought was to me for him I'm too late he is in his 60s and that was his question it's too late I've sinned so much that God could love me the Holy Spirit transformed him before our eyes see these sisters did not wait they believed in what God could do in the present you know right now as a nation I believe we're experiencing the wrath of God and I believe that he has given them over to a debased mind but that doesn't mean that God has put a closed sign up over his church well it's too late for them you know just keep having church keep having

Bible study keep waiting for me God hasn't done that to you or to us as his church we have a mission and a nation that needs the church to be the church that God has called us to be but the question is are we going to have limited faith by making an idol of the past when times were good when the pews were full is most of our attention going to be directed there what God has done or do we do the opposite like Martha thinking of what God will one day do but just not now he'll do extraordinary things in the future just not now yes we should be heavenly minded we should be thinking future of what glory awaits us there in Christ but we have a command and it deals with right now right now go and make disciples of everyone the church is still open for business and the fields are ripe for harvest it isn't too late for you it isn't too late for our church to see

God at work in mighty ways it is not too late so how did Jesus deal with Martha's limited faith expressed by her it's too late attitude well we see that he begins to refocus her attention on the

present and who he is and what he has done look at verse 25 and 26 Jesus said to her right now I am the resurrection and the life whoever believes in me though he die yet shall he live and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die do you believe this Martha's faith was limited but Jesus didn't beat her up about it did he she was she was down her brother had just died recently and you know what a public rebuke would have further crushed the spirits of this poor woman that wouldn't work that doesn't work you know as an athlete they say there's two different kinds of coaches there's a players coach and there's a coaches coach a coaches coach is going to be more of a disciplinarian he's not going to be as encouraging his relationship with his players are going to be more on the surface and he's going to express his frustrations when that player makes mistakes in ways that I think are discouraging to the player but he thinks that's what's going to motivate him you make a mistake out on the field or the court and the coach will yell at you in some way to point out before the rest of your teammates and everyone else in the building what you've done and how you've made a mistake you know what else he might do is he might pick up a water bottle or something else and throw it on the ground as he looks at you and does so you know for me as a player

[38 : 34] I thought I know I've messed up and I don't need anyone else to reveal that to me I feel bad enough the players coach is the one who doesn't not discipline his players but goes about it in a different way you've made an error you've made a mistake and will wait for a one on one opportunity usually in the dugout or on the bench to say hey this is what you've done to make that mistake here's what you can do better and also to give encouraging words better not making a bad situation worse but making the most out of a bad situation to encourage the one going through it and that's what Jesus did here that's the approach he takes with us when we're down and he does it for Martha she has limited faith but he's not mad at her her failure in thinking that it was too!

late! this moment to teach her and what did he teach her he began by saying to her two words that mean so much I am I am using the covenant name of God telling her teaching her that he has no limitations telling her Martha where I am there is life where I am the dead come back to life there are no limitations to the one who has power of resurrection and life I can give life at any time the life that he gives is eternal the Bible says we are born spiritually dead but in the new birth we receive from

Christ everlasting life as he says though we die physically the believer never experiences life outside of God's presence in death their souls are set free from this body of sin to be later reunited with an imperishable glorified resurrected one 1 Corinthians 15 53 53 I tell you this brothers flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable behold I tell you a mystery we shall not all sleep but we shall all be changed in a moment in the twinkling of an eye at the last trumpet for the trumpet will sound and the dead will be raised imperishable and we shall be changed for this perishable body must put on the imperishable and this mortal body must put on immortality and so what Jesus does here with Martha in the present is to move her to the future but but we would think wasn't that part of

Martha's problem limiting Jesus and what he could do to the future not what he could do in the present Jesus has a point in this he's got a point and his point is to focus her on the future resurrection that will happen so that she wouldn't waste her present by minimizing her faith in what he would do know that I will do this make the most of your present knowing that that's going to happen growing up I was a wrestling fan Hulk Hogan the ultimate warrior Bret the hitman heart these were some of my heroes and I remember one day my dad telling me we're going to go to the WWF it was the WWF back then and said we're going to sit in the front row the front row and I knew my dad and

I've been blessed to have a godly father and I knew that what my dad said would happen my dad when he promised me things delivered and so I had no doubt all that day that I was going to sit front row at the WWF and you know what I did I told all my friends there's no doubt that this is going to happen guess what's happening to me tonight I'm going to see the WWF in town and not only that I'm going to sit on the front row and we went and I sat on the front row but not only that we got to go backstage we got to see the wrestlers I got autographs when we came back out and sat in the front row guess he wore these sunglasses when he came down to the ring and he made it down to the ring he was in a tag team the heart foundation and he looked over at me this kid who was excited out of his mind to be sitting front row at the

[43 : 57] WWF and he stepped down and he came over to me and he took his glasses off and he put them on me and he said kid you look like you could use some sunglasses and I thought what has just happened to me amazing I still have those sunglasses as a matter of fact I knew that what my dad promised me would come to pass and when it came to pass it was far more wonderful than I ever imagined and I told my friends and everyone I knew in the present look at what my dad has said is going to happen to me is it any different for us our heavenly father is much greater than any earthly father as great as they are if our heavenly father has made a promise and he has promises to us of what awaits us man we better be busy in the present telling people right now and so

Jesus pressed Martha to see his unlimited ability with a simple question do you believe notice what he didn't say he didn't say now that you've heard that Martha I'm the resurrection and the life does that make you feel better he didn't say that he said do you believe he wasn't interested in merely changing her feelings but her disposition feelings can be misleading and deceiving but faith should be fixed it is anchored in the rock of ages it's a life built upon the truth of God that he has revealed to us through his word and though the storms threaten the life built on the rock holds in suffering we know that Christ knows us loves us is in control of us and that he will be glorified through it all in the end and we with him and in the present we know that it's never too late for the Lord to do great things right now that will praise his name greatly and so the Lord asks you the same question today do you believe unbeliever he asks you the question do you believe that I am the resurrection and the life do you know that I have come to die for your sins in your place that I have been raised on the third day it's not about you being good enough and it's not too late for you no matter how much sin you've accumulated you put your faith in Jesus Christ and who he is and what he has done and you will be saved now and forevermore eternal life starts for you the moment you believe what about you believer I think he still asks you the same thing!

Do you believe? has your faith been limited by what you see by your own understanding and he says to you hey yeah don't forget the past and what I've done don't forget certainly the future and what I have in store for you but those two things should dramatically affect your present right now get to work let's do it Martha isn't quite there yet she said to him though and gave a great answer! well done Martha here she said to him yes Lord I believe that you are the Christ the son of God who is coming into the world again she's not quite there but she's getting there and she goes with him still she'll make one final protest about not removing the stone but she goes with the Lord knowing that it's his will that will be done and so even when we are tempted to think it's too late God moves in ways to make us remember and to realize that he has no limits and that his will to be glorified in and through you cannot be thwarted I love Philippians chapter 1 verse 6 and

[48 : 55] Paul's confidence his faith in the Lord I am sure of this and his faith in the Lord for others I am sure of this that he who began a good work in you speaking of salvation will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ even when our faith is too little!

God has a way to come alongside of us and say hey don't lean on your understanding acknowledge me follow me he wants to do great things right now in your life and in our church the second attitude that we need to kill that limits our faith in Christ don't place limitations on Christ with an attitude that says it's too much don't place limitations on Christ with an attitude that says it's too much and so now Jesus moves to the next scene John moves to the next scene where we encounter the other sister of Lazarus Mary Martha goes to Mary she tells him that Jesus has arrived in verse 28 Mary was still in the house being comforted by mourners in verse 29 and then Mary rushes to Jesus in verse 30 and the rest of the crowd who is with her follows her thinking she's going to the tomb of Lazarus to weep in verse 31 and then

Mary gets to Jesus and she makes the same statement verbatim that Martha made Lord if you had been here my brother would not have died Mary is overcome with grief we know from scripture and other instances of these two that she was the more emotional of the two sisters and so when she comes to Jesus she melts into the ground at his feet and says Lord and I imagine her voice breaking Lord if you had been here my brother would not have died she collapses at his feet because for her it's just too much to bear the situation is too hopeless have you ever felt that way before I mean literally a situation where you felt like it was just too much that you collapsed into the ground that you just melted into the floor that as you prayed you couldn't even come up with the words it was just groanings and in that moment maybe like

Mary you thought Lord it's just too much this cannot be reversed there's no hope for tomorrow Mary's attitude that it was too much was shared by the Jewish mourners!

that followed her to where Jesus was gone and they expressed the same kind of attitude it's too much Jesus he's gone you weren't here and all we have now is just grief unbearable grief verse 33 when Jesus saw her weeping and the Jews who had come with her also weeping he was deeply moved in his spirit and greatly troubled we need to spend some time talking about those two things his being deeply moved and troubled in the Greek deeply moved is a word that literally is used to refer to the sound a horse makes when it snorts I won't mimic that noise for you today and in other places in scripture it's translated as sternly warned!

[52 : 48] or scolding and what that word indicates or what it's used for is to acknowledge the anger or the outrage or indignation of a person and so here Jesus takes all of this in and he is righteously angry his righteous anger has been kindled by what he sees and so we ask the question well what is he angry about I think there's two things that he's angry about here first of all the reality of sin and death and what it does the reality of sin and death and what it does to his people who he loves and then with that with that the thought of those who believed that it was just too late and were wailing and weeping like pagans like people of the world acting as if there was no hope so he's deeply moved he's also troubled and troubled that uses to describe strong emotions it's the same word that that described

Herod's reaction to the arrival of the Magi when he was afraid of another king of the Jews on the scene it describes! Jesus described Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane and how he was troubled in spirit about his impending death Jesus knows what he's about to do he's deeply moved and he's greatly troubled he knows all along and has known all along what he's going to do for Lazarus and bringing him back to life and here we see that our Lord was not a man without emotions and let me just say by the way men it is good for you to show and express your emotions whether it's righteous anger when it's necessary or weeping for those who are devastated it doesn't make you less of a man what it does is it makes you like

Jesus verse 34 Jesus moved he's troubled he asked where have you laid him they said to him Lord come and see and Jesus wept and again that word is a rare word in the Greek it's a verb that's only used here in the New Testament and it connotes a silent bursting of tears you ever been in that spot before so overcome that you just it's like an explosion took place inside of you sin but you just can't and you sob and you weep and so Jesus' tears here I believe were generated by his love for Lazarus by his grief over the deadly effect of sin in a fallen world and reveals to us that as Isaiah said in verse 53 he was truly a man of sorrows acquainted with grief yes he's angry but his heart also breaks for the people that he loves in verse 36 it says there so the

Jews said we see how he loved him but some of them again expressed doubts that it was just too late and too much could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man also kept this man from dying the Jews were correct in seeing Jesus' tears as evidence that he did love Lazarus but as we'll see they were wrong to think that they reflected any kind of despair in our Lord he knew what he was going to do he knew what he could do and this is a dark moment but it wasn't a helpless moment these people were acting as if they were in despair but with Jesus there they shouldn't have been because of what he is able to do in the present in this dark moment will soon as we see next week Lord willing radically change into a completely different kind of moment Thomas Fuller was a great Puritan reformer of the 17th century and he's famous for having made a statement that you've probably heard before but didn't know came from him he said that the darkest hour of the night comes just before the dawn it's always darkest just before the dawn this is a dark moment but Jesus is there Jesus will raise Lazarus but more importantly when we are tempted to think that a situation in our life is just too much for Christ when Jesus Christ was raised from the dead that the tomb was empty Jesus put death to death he lives now he reigns now and forever the grave could not hold him death could not defeat him he lives forever and so with

[58 : 28] Jesus it is never too late and it's never too much and so for you and I to live right now is to make much of Christ in the present knowing that to die in Christ means great gain but again I ask you do you have the faith to believe that for you and for our church it's not too late and it isn't too much for you unbeliever the Lord calls out to you and says it's not too late for you today is the day of salvation and your sin isn't too much for me to overcome and if you would come to me if he is calling out to you and you come to him you will have life and transformation right now in the present and the future that makes total sense having a past that is totally redeemed and this is what

I want to say to us as a church I don't have application questions this morning but I do have an application for us as a church to undertake I believe that when God moves it often comes first when

his!

pray and we have a lot to pray about for this summer we have VBS that is going to take place the Lord is going to bring kids into our church to hear the gospel we are going to take our teenagers to Falls Creek we're going to take our kids to children's camp we're going to do things as a church to reach out to our neighbors and share the good news of Jesus Christ and what I am asking you to be praying about is that God would move in mighty ways through all of these things to demonstrate who he is and to save lost people and that they would know Christ as their Lord and Savior and so I'm going to ask you to do something a little bit different a little bit uncomfortable I want you to pray about these things throughout this summer but I want you to come forward and pray for it now are you taking the kids to camp are you taking the teens to Falls Creek are you volunteering for VBS I want you to come now are you planning to share the gospel I want you to come now And I want you to pray! God would grant to you a faith that isn't too little and doesn't say that it's too late or that it's too much Lord use me in the present to make much of your name right now and if you want to see the Lord at work in your life and in this church in the present then make that known right now let's not waste our time and let's not waste our lives God it's not too late and it isn't too much do we want to see people come to faith in Jesus Christ we trust that God is sovereign but we want to see him do it now let's pray during our invitation that he does it now and so I ask our praise team go ahead and come up and lead us but while you lead us let's just pray that God does it now in believing in faith that he is the God of the past he is the God of the future but he has control of the present right now