



## Introduction:

God created mankind to be relational. God designed us, from the beginning, to communicate with Himself and others (Genesis 2:15-25). On a relational level, people have a need to satisfy their spirit, soul, and body (1 Thessalonians 5:23; Genesis 1:26-27). God created us this way for a reason and purpose, ultimately to bring glory and honor to Him (Psalm 148:13; 1 Corinthians 15:28). Life consists of relationships. They are what really matter. Remember, God created us to value relationships, but sin damaged our relationship with God until He sent the Savior, Jesus Christ (Genesis 2:16-17; 3:6-7, 22-24; Romans 5:12; Ephesians 2:1-3, 7-17). Only a relationship with Christ will reconcile and restore one's relationship with God (Romans 5:1; 2 Corinthians 5:17-19).

## The Focus:

- **Every person must establish a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Why?**
  - **Because Jesus' love is personal.**
  - **Because Jesus' compassion is real.**
  - **Because Jesus' wisdom is divine.**
  - **Because Jesus' power is limitless.**

On Sunday, Pastor Dan brought another sermon from John 11. The central focus of his message was on the importance of having a relationship with Jesus Christ. And it is a relationship with Christ which gives our lives meaning and purpose. Christ's love is for all, even to His enemies (Romans 5:8). Jesus loved others, as demonstrated in the story with Lazarus and his family (vs. 1-3, 5, 36). If you have trusted in Christ, God no longer sees you in your sins; He sees you in His Son, Jesus Christ (Romans 5:1-11). Christ's love sees beyond who you are to who you can be. His love doesn't hold past sins against you, but rather, it offers grace and forgiveness. God's love is sincere; it is good, honest, and kind.

Not only is Christ's love a personal love, His compassion is real. When Christ arrived, the atmosphere among the people was very somber and troubled. Even though Christ was the literal embodiment of hope, He still wept with them in their time of sorrow. When you come to know Christ and experience His love, He teaches you to love others in the same way (Ephesians 4:32; 5:2, 25). Jesus was moved by the emotions and feelings of others (vs. 32-36), and as believers, we ought to join in on the joy and pain of others (Romans 12:15). No matter how adverse your circumstances, Christ understands how to comfort and sustain you. Additionally, through the power of the Holy Spirit, God can use you to comfort and sustain others (2 Corinthians 1:3-5).

God's timing is perfect; therefore, His wisdom is perfect – it is divine. After receiving word that Lazarus was sick, Christ waited two more days (vs. 4, 6). Upon His arrival, Lazarus had been dead for four days (vs. 17). However, there was wisdom behind the delay. Christ would wait to perform the miraculous until the moment it would bring God the most glory (vs. 4) and others to belief (vs. 15). Immediately, His wisdom and motives were questioned. The disciples questioned His going (vs. 8, 12). Martha and Mary questioned His delay (vs. 20, 32). And the rest of the Jews questioned His wisdom in waiting to see the

seriousness of Lazarus' sickness (vs. 37). Christ's wisdom was questioned at every turn, but their sorrow was quickly turned to joy when Christ uttered the words (vs. 43), "*Lazarus, come forth.*" We must remember that promise of Romans 8:28, "*...all things work together for good.*" Jesus, who was God in the flesh (John 1:14), embodies wisdom (Proverbs 2: 6; 8:22-30; 1 Corinthians 1:24, 30). When you know Jesus, your relationship with Him provides you all of His divine wisdom, and it lives inside of you (1 Corinthians 2:16; Colossians 2:3, 9-10).

Christ holds all power (Hebrews 1:3; John 1:3). Christ is the Word, and the Word was and is God (John 1:1). There is nobody in history that has possessed greater power than Christ. After His resurrection Christ stated in Matthew 28:18, "*...All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.*" When we enter into a relationship with Christ, it is clear that He holds all power. Christ upon raising Lazarus commanded (vs. 44), "*...Loose him, and let him go.*" It is on the authority of Christ and by His power that we are declared to be free – sin and death have no more dominion over those of us who believe (Romans 6:9, 14).

### **Response to the Sermon:**

Pastor Dan's message spoke on the aspects of a relationship with Christ. Christ promised his followers that if they loved Him, he and the Father would dwell with them (John 14:23). As believers in Christ, we are not just promised that God will dwell with us; we are promised that He will dwell in us (1 Corinthians 6:19; 2 Corinthians 6:16). Does God dwell in you? If you have trusted in Christ, are you manifesting that love to others (John 21:15-17)? Who in your sphere of influence can you tell about Christ's love, compassion, wisdom and power? Share at least one aspect of how a relationship with Christ has changed you.

### **Bible Study Thoughts & Questions:**

If relationships are important, and the Bible speaks of a relationship with God being the determining factor on one's eternity, then it seems imperative every person make certain of their relationship with Him (John 14:6; Ephesians 2:18). Our relationships, at least the ones that endure, are predicated on love. God's love is: patient and tolerant; content and trusting; humble; kind and good; diligent and edifying; temperate and disciplined; and helpful (1 Corinthians 13:4-5). Love seeks after truth, and it endures the good times and the bad (1 Corinthians 13:6-7).

How has your love in your relationships with others failed?

Although circumstances can be sorrowful (John 11:32-36), what should we learn through our difficulties in this life (Hebrews 5:7-8)?

What must be dwelling in us for us to have an impact on others (Colossians 3:16)?

Where does a believer draw their power (Ephesians 6:10)?

**Application Questions:**

Pastor Dan made the well-known statement, "It's not what you know, but who you know." And if that statement is true, as the Bible is true, then it is vital that every person know Christ (Romans 10:9). Once you have established a relationship with someone, you then begin to know them on a deeper level. For Christians it is no different. In our pursuit to become like Christ (Romans 8:29), we must strive to know Him and who He is (Philippians 3:10).

If you are saved, what was your life like before you had a relationship with Christ? What has Christ brought you from?

How has Christ shown you compassion since being in a relationship with Him?

Has there been a time when you have questioned God's wisdom? Reflecting back on your situation, how did God work it together for good?

Just as Lazarus was raised to life and restored to health by Christ's power (John 11:43-44; 12:1-2), how has the power of God been seen in your life?

**Prayer:**

- Pray that you would desire to know God more (Philippians 3:10).
- Pray that you would be filled with the knowledge of God (Ephesians 1:17-18).
- Pray that you would be aware of the struggles and triumphs of others so that you can fellowship in others' hurts and healing (Romans 12:15).