

What the Humanity of Jesus Means

John 11:28-37

Introduction: Was the incarnation a rescue mission for humanity? Did God the Son leave heaven for a quick “in and out” salvation sortie? What would cause Christ to volunteer for such a thing? AND....even more importantly is this question; What did Jesus volunteer to do when He left heaven.

Our text this morning occurs before the tomb of Lazarus. Jesus knows what He is about to do. He has brought the events of this moment to pass Himself and in His sovereign power has managed every detail of it, and yet, we see a side of Him that is strangely in contrast to Sovereign Power and Deity. We see Him broken like the rest and deeply troubled and.....well.....let's just read it together and then we will talk about it.

John 11:28-37 ²⁸ When she had said this, she went away and called Mary her sister, saying secretly, "The Teacher is here and is calling for you." ²⁹ And when she heard it, she got up quickly and was coming to Him. ³⁰ Now Jesus had not yet come into the village, but was still in the place where Martha met Him. ³¹ Then the Jews who were with her in the house, and consoling her, when they saw that Mary got up quickly and went out, they followed her, supposing that she was going to the tomb to weep there. ³² Therefore, when Mary came where Jesus was, she saw Him, and fell at His feet, saying to Him, "Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died." ³³ When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her *also* weeping, He was deeply moved in spirit and was troubled, ³⁴ and said, "Where have you laid him?" They said to Him, "Lord, come and see." ³⁵ Jesus wept. ³⁶ So the Jews were saying, "See how He loved him!" ³⁷ But some of them said, "Could not this man, who opened the eyes of the blind man, have kept this man also from dying?"

One of the greatest misconceptions of Jesus is that He was not really very much like us. It is an unspoken and sometime subconscious thought. I mean....He never sinned, for example, must mean that He was not even tempted to sin. He was impervious to the sinful desires that human people have. It is almost like He was pretending to be a man when all along He was just God. This difficulty has given rise to numerous heresies throughout the ages.

There are those who say that Jesus is NOT the God of creation. [Jehovah's Witnesses and Mormons are the most well know of these, but every cult denies the full Deity of Christ and His absolute equality and oneness with the God of Creation]

Others deny His humanity. First century Gnostics were among those men the apostles contended with, in the New Testament. That struggle prompted John to write this....

1 John 1:1-2 That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched-- this we proclaim concerning the Word of life. ² The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to

it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us.

After the resurrection His own disciples were tempted to think that Jesus was not “Really Human.”

Luke 24:38-43 ³⁸ He said to them, "Why are you troubled, and why do doubts rise in your minds? ³⁹ Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself! Touch me and see; a ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have." ⁴⁰ When he had said this, he showed them his hands and feet. ⁴¹ And while they still did not believe it because of joy and amazement, he asked them, "Do you have anything here to eat?" ⁴² They gave him a piece of broiled fish, ⁴³ and he took it and ate it in their presence.

I do not want us to make this evangelical error of thinking that Christ Jesus was somehow LESS human that we are. We mean it as a complement, but in the end it diminishes Christ. It certainly devalues the incarnation and the crucifixion in our mind....because we imagine that it really was not that hard for Him. But it was and it was done because of His love for you and me.

John has spends most of his gospel seeking to convince men of the deity of Jesus Christ. That Jesus is the God who Created the Universe:

John 1:1-3 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was in the beginning with God. ³ All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.

Jesus repeatedly claims to have come down from heaven and to be the Son of the One True God.....but John records this scene because it is vital for your relationship and faith in Christ.

Jesus spoke first with Martha. Martha believed but like all of us did not know Christ fully. She knew He could heal, but she did not know that He Himself was and is the source of all life. Jesus leads her to deeper faith by revealing Himself more fully. If you want your faith to increase then you absolutely must expose yourself to Christ. You need to know Him more if you will trust Him more and love Him more. You need to do this by reading, and studying the Scripture and by deliberately putting yourself under Christ exalting preaching. Martha headed straight out to be with Jesus.....This was a very wise choice. She ended up giving one of the great confessions of all Scripture.

John 11:27 ²⁷ She said to Him, "Yes, Lord; I have believed that You are the Christ, the Son of God, *even* He who comes into the world."

When she had said this, she went away and called Mary her sister, saying secretly, "The Teacher is here and is calling for you." And when she heard it, she got up quickly and was coming to Him: Jesus said, Martha....go and call Mary. I want to talk to her as well. Jesus stayed at some place on the road outside the village and sent for Mary.

Now Jesus had not yet come into the village, but was still in the place where Martha met Him: He did not go down into the village to join in this funeral mourning at Lazarus' home.

Then the Jews who were with her in the house, and consoling her, when they saw that Mary got up quickly and went out, they followed her, supposing that she was going to the tomb to weep there: Jesus gets the entire company of mourners to come out to Him in order to carry out the two purposes He has already revealed for this event. The first is to reveal the spectacle of the power of God that He possesses fully with the Father.

John 11:4 ⁴ But when Jesus heard *this*, He said, "This sickness is not to end in death, but for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified by it."

The second is to cause faith or trust in Himself to be the God of creation.

John 11:15 ¹⁵ and I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, so that you may believe; but let us go to him."

Therefore, when Mary came where Jesus was, she saw Him, and fell at His feet, saying to Him, "Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died.": I am sure Martha and Mary had been saying this to one another and themselves for several days now. It is the first thing that comes out of their mouths. It expresses great faith in Jesus as a healer and they knew He loved them.

When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her *also* weeping, He was deeply moved in spirit and was troubled: It was the custom of that day for even the poorest family to hire a professional wailing woman and at least two flute players to mourn at the funeral. John MacArthur notes that..... "*since Mary, Martha and Lazarus were a prominent family, they would likely have had even more professional mourners, in addition to the others who came to pay their respects.*"

The word weep does not do justice to the Greek word which means to wail and loudly lament. This is not something that can be done quietly. It is loud and since you can hire professionals to do it, it is contrived and not a sincere expression of grief.

The expression "deeply moved" typically describes anger that is about to be followed by a rebuke or a scolding. It is used of an angry horse's snorting. Something he does before he starts kicking and stomping and biting. "Troubled" means loss of calm and churning emotions.

Let me try to put this scene in perspective with a little prudent paraphrasing. "*When Jesus therefore saw Mary wailing and yelling and all the Jews who came with her doing the same thing He became deeply annoyed to the point of anger in His heart and was disturbed by it all.*"

Have you ever seen some of the middle eastern funerals on the news after there has been a terrorist attack? It is a scene of chaos. A lot of the women you see carrying on are paid

to come and do that. This custom still exists in that region of the world. Jesus apparently did not like it one bit. It was pagan grieving of the kind that has no hope for eternal life and resurrection.

Christ was certainly also deeply moved over the entire curse of death. Death was never God's design. Satan tempted Adam and death passed upon creation. IT is Satan's response to the God of Life. He will be the god of death. God is pretty clear about how He feels about death.

Ezekiel 18:32 ³² "For I have no pleasure in the death of anyone who dies," declares the Lord GOD. "Therefore, repent and live."

So Jesus stands in the midst of this crowd that should know God and trust Him for eternal life and He watches even those with faith succumb to hopelessness and despair in the face of death. Even those who believe in the doctrine of the resurrection are yelling loud laments and indulging in insincere wailing. There is plenty to be disturbed at and plenty to be angry about. BUT....Jesus does not rebuke them. There is the flash of indignation followed by a calm and simple question.... **He said, "Where have you laid him?" They said to Him, "Lord, come and see."**

Jesus wept: This is a different word altogether from the one translated "weeping." It stands in sharp contrast to the wailers and the lamenters. Jesus quietly began to weep and the tears flowed down His cheeks as He stood before the tomb of His dear friend. The Jews knew that their wailers were hired and that all the shouting and carrying on was for show. They were, like many religions people still, living outwardly in the hope that God would count what they do and grant them favor. The outward was and still usually the thing rather than the heart. This was God's complaint against Israel going back to the prophets.

Isaiah 29:13This people draw near with their words And honor Me with their lip service, But they remove their hearts far from Me, And their reverence for Me consists of tradition learned *by rote*,

So the Jews were saying, "See how He loved him!": They could see that this was not the kind of mourning they were doing. It was entirely different. And they were absolutely correct in their conclusion...."see how He loved him!"

But some of them said, "Could not this man, who opened the eyes of the blind man, have kept this man also from dying?": Martha and Mary were not alone in their conclusion that Jesus could have healed Lazarus. They had faith that He was the healer. This is good, but Jesus said that Lazarus died so that the Son might be exalted and that people might believe and trust Him with their eternal souls. The stage is now fully set for Him to do this in the most unexpected and spectacular way. We will study that in detail next week. For now I want us to just consider what has gone on in this passage and make some applications to our lives.

CONCLUSION: Jesus has returned to the village of Lazarus during their funeral and has observed all the contrived grieving and customs of death. He sees hopelessness and despair and some true grief. Certainly Martha and Mary were beside themselves with grief and loss. Death has claimed their beloved brother.

Christ has spent the last six months in a running battle with the Pharisees over His claims to be The Living God of Creation. This is the emphasis of His sermons and miracles and they are deeply angry and offended.

Not only that but Jesus knew what He was going to do before the tomb of Lazarus. He knows what He will do in the last day when He calls all us out of the grave and gives us our physical lives back. He knows this and yet He stands before the tomb of Lazarus and bursts into tears and quietly sobs. Even those present knew that this was a sincere expression of grief over the death of Lazarus and the fact that death has to happen at all. It is the bane of human existence.

How Human is Jesus? He is totally human. We are asking the wrong question. The question is how human are we? God made man in His image but sin scarred it and vandalized that image. What we are is not the measure of humanity. Christ Jesus is!! How much have we lost in the fall? It is an unspeakable loss....BUT....and I stress this....Christ Jesus came to redeem us from the curse of sin and the fall of our race.

It was an intimate and grief filled coming. Jesus did not stand aloof and call men to be good. He became one of us in order to live for God perfectly and die for man perfectly and in so doing reconcile you to God.

Philippians 2:5-8 ⁵ Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, ⁶ who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷ but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, *and* being made in the likeness of men. ⁸ Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

Speaking of this gospel good news of salvation Paul said.....

2 Corinthians 5:18 - 6:1 ¹⁸ Now all *these* things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, ¹⁹ namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation. ²⁰ Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. ²¹ He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

Answer this Questions: This is very important to know and to internalize. The Eternal existing Son of God, who never new any pain, any rejection, any sin, any grief.....are you with me.....This son of God forever altered His nature and became one of His own creatures. He did not go back to the way it was before after the crucifixion. In heaven today there is a human man with blood and flesh and a pulse and a breath. If we were there right now we would be able to feel His pulse. This is the extent of God's

willingness to save you. It is the extent of His love for you. It was not JUST the Cross. It was His humanity that most thoroughly reveals His love for us.

And it is the way...the one way that God is able to bring us into His presence. Christ left heaven, stepped into the womb of Mary, was born, lived without sin, volunteered to take our place in death and rose from the Grave because death has now power over the author and sustainer of life.

Hebrews 2:9 ⁹ But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, now crowned with glory and honor because he suffered death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.

Ask for a verdict: I think we should have a response to this. It should be a profound sense of how much Christ has loved us. To become US??? To voluntarily suffer with us and grieve with us and weep with us and die with us....in order to save us. And....do not think for a moment that Christ rejects you because you are human. This is insanely wrong. Our humanity is a gift from God. It was His idea. Its hopes and aspirations and love and desires....they were His idea. Yes they have been deeply damaged by sin, but humanity is not the problem it is sin.

Hebrews 2:10-13 ¹⁰ In bringing many sons to glory, it was fitting that God, for whom and through whom everything exists, should make the author of their salvation perfect through suffering. ¹¹ Both the one who makes men holy and those who are made holy are of the same family. So Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers. ¹² He says, "I will declare your name to my brothers; in the presence of the congregation I will sing your praises." ¹³ And again, "I will put my trust in him." And again he says, "Here am I, and the children God has given me."

Jesus does not weep when you suffer in this life. He is not sitting in heaven mocking you for your brokenness and sin. He is compassionate and tender toward us....even praying to the Father on YOUR behalf.

Hebrews 7:25 ⁵ Therefore He is able also to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.

Seeing Jesus before Lazarus' tomb should convince you of this....

Hebrews 4:15-16 ⁵we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as *we are, yet* without sin. ¹⁶ Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.