

never get to know what's on my heart, I'll just become more and more defensive, and allusive. That might be called the grave clothes of death, as I end up digging myself deeper, falsely looking there for safety.

Thank God in Jesus we can be clothed in the clothes of life, in Jesus. We can bring his life into every situation, even the dead ones. And look what happened to Lazarus when Jesus spoke. The dead became alive. Wow!

Have you got a relationship, a situation that feels dead? Don't resist an evil person, attacking a dead person,

a dead relationship won't bring life. Invite Jesus to dress you, so that in your words, your actions, you live out his life giving presence.

And don't wait for the other person to change before you act. I've noticed that dead things don't change. Not for the better, anyway! Focus on Jesus and his life giving word, and live it, be it, wear it.

Jesus does have the power and authority to make a difference. The difference we're all after; a healthy, vibrant loving relationship which breathes life into everything we do. I

certainly want to be sharing this life with Jesus, daily putting of the grave clothes and dressing in Jesus' clothes of life.

Let us pray.  
Jesus grow me to know you more and more. Not just to know about you, but to know you, and to daily share your life with you. Fill me with your passion for life and for people and your courage to give expression to that passion, so that I can cry and laugh with other people as you do. Amen.

---

## Christ Church Lutheran

Worship Times - 9.00am & 10.45am  
Pastor: Tim 0427326553



Jesus' Disciples, who grow disciples, who grow disciples, who grow disciples...

10 April 2011

## WHO IS THIS MAN: JESUS—5

John 11:1-45



Who knows what the shortest verse in the bible is? 'Jesus wept' John 11:35. This reveals something special about the person, Jesus. He's a man of passion. Jesus isn't some stoic, who has a stiff upper lip, but he is a man who is able to weep for and with his friends.

Actually you can't build a friendship without some vulnerability when it comes to our emotions. You'll find it hard work getting to know someone who is guarded with their emotions. It's risky business revealing your emotions.

Our fallen nature has put our default setting on caution, to being guarded. We've been hurt, and don't wish to be hurt again.

Humanity has felt the pain of a breakup with God. And that pain is deep within our being. It's a crippling pain that leads to caution, that leads to us covering up, and putting on a happy face, a pretty face, so that we'll be accepted and liked.

Isn't it interesting how much money we as a society spend on putting on a pretty face, seeking to look good, so we can feel good, hoping other people will judge us good. We spend billions of dollars hiding our real, everyday face.

So it's refreshing to see here that Jesus risks being vulnerable; he weeps. And in public. And that vulnerability is met with what? Some people commented; "See how he loved him!" While others

commented; "Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?" Which is rather harsh. One of Jesus' best friends has just died, and here he is met with condemnation.

Now that's not what I would consider appropriate, when someone is hurting, grieving the death of a loved one. With vulnerability there is always risk. Jesus chooses to take the risk, so that we might know we are loved. Jesus chooses to take the risk, because he knows he is loved by the Father, and would rather that relationship shape him than the hurting relationship of those who are lashing out in their insecurity.

This is another example of what it means to live

by faith alone. Jesus isn't here reciting the Apostle's Creed, knowing the facts about the Father; knows him intimately, personally, lovingly and chooses to step out letting this relationship shape his actions.

Have you ever been faced with a similar choice; simply responding to another person's hurt, or letting Jesus love for you shape your response?

Did you notice that Jesus didn't lash out calling these people a bunch of heartless so and so's. Rather Jesus focuses on his friends, Mary and Martha, and their grief.

This week I was reminded of this way of acting when a friend was sharing on part of the Sermon of the Mount. Jesus said; "But I tell you, do not resist an evil person." (Matt. 6:39) They felt Jesus

revealing to them, don't engage, don't get into a battle with an evil person. Which said to me; don't let them set the agenda, and thereby shape not only the conversation but the relationship as well.

Here Jesus chooses not to resist and evil person, or at least a

---

### Jesus risks being real; and weeps.

---

thoughtless person, at worst and envious person. Jesus chooses to let his Father shape his action and so focuses on Mary and Martha, and he weeps with them in their grief.

Have you ever found yourself in a situation where you've lashed out to defend yourself from unfair, even hurtful, heartless words? Jesus offers you a healthier alternative; don't do it. Stay true to who you know you are

as one of the Father's children, whom he loves and is the focus of his delight. You've got nothing to prove, and you'll never win the person, even if you win the argument. Don't resist. Ask Jesus to give you the wisdom to love.

Jesus loves Mary and Martha, and Lazarus of course. If he'd spent his time arguing the point, look what would have been missed. Jesus wept.

He was vulnerable in showing his love for his friends.

Which is good news, seeing I'm one of Jesus' friends. One of his friends who finds it hard to be vulnerable, who finds that it doesn't come naturally to freely express my deepest feelings.

Now this isn't an exercise in putting myself down, but simply acknowledging that my default setting

after humanities breakup with God is to be cautious, is to protect myself. I don't want to have my heart broken. Neither does God.

But God takes the risk of staying true to himself, and he risks showing his feelings for his friends, he weeps. Jesus lives by faith alone, not responding to life's hurts, not attacking because he's been attacked, not retaliating to win the argument. Jesus lives by faith alone, faith in his Father; who is totally committed to his son. Jesus builds his life on this wonderful relationship.

And the result with Jesus is life. Life in the face of death. Wow! Jesus says; "Take off the grave clothes and let him go." Why would anyone want to wear grave clothes when they can celebrate life? Celebrate life together with Jesus,

being clothed by him; clothed in his love, his grace, his mercy, his forgiveness, his peace, his patience, his wisdom, his joy.

Jesus could have clothed himself in the grave clothes of death, and gave as good as he got. He could have been broken hearted

---

### What would you rather do; hide or be real?

---

under their harsh, cold, loveless response. But Jesus doesn't dress in grave clothes. Thank God for that. Jesus dresses in his Father's loving embrace, in a healthy vibrant relationship with his Father. Jesus chooses to dress in the clothes of life, and so he brings life. Life out of death.

What would you rather do; dress in the grave clothes of death, or in Jesus' clothes of life? I think I know your

answer – you're in favour of life, being dressed in Jesus' clothes of life, right.

Who is this man; Jesus? Today we see he's a real man, who's not scared to risk being real. Who's not afraid to show his emotions, and cry with his friends. Today I see a

man who doesn't live simply from what is done to him or said about him, but a man who lives by faith. Faith in his Father, and the

wonderful relationship they share. That's far more influential and important to Jesus that winning an argument, or getting his rights. Especially when winning the argument means becoming more alienated to you.

Have you noticed that when you come out swinging, when you resist, it only creates more barriers. It only hardens a scared and insecure heart. Come out swinging and you'll