

CITYWEST CHURCH

21.12.25 - 10 AM

ADVENT #4 - LOVE

“BORN THAT MAN NO MORE MAY DIE.”

He came into the very world he created, but the world didn't recognize him. **11** He came to his own people, and even they rejected him. **12** But to all who believed him and accepted him, he gave the right to become children of God. **13** They are reborn—not with a physical birth resulting from human passion or plan, but a birth that comes from God.

14 So the Word became human^[a] and made his home among us. He was full of unfailing love and faithfulness.^[a] And we have seen his glory, the glory of the Father's one and only Son.

John 1:10-14 (NLT)

Few Christmas carols preach the gospel stronger than Hark the Herald Angels sing, and in my opinion, God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen, especially its line “to save us all from Satan's Power though we had gone astray, o tidings of comfort and joy.

But Hark the Herald leaves us with the line that Jesus was born so that we don't have to die. We will all die, but we will live forever in Christ because of Jesus' birth, life, death, and resurrection.

Christmas is like the Genesis and the promise fulfilled of the OT. The love of God is on display clearly and powerfully for all to see.

Jesus wasn't born just for inspiration or to create a holiday for us all, he was born to die, so that death would not sting those who are in Christ.

Advent is about making room, to remind ourselves, not just on Christmas morning, but for the whole season that love is not something that is far off and away, but it is close and that love came to earth in Jesus and that his death is ultimate expression of his love.

When Jesus arrived at Bethany, he was told that Lazarus had already been in his grave for four days. **18** Bethany was only a few miles[d] down the road from Jerusalem, **19** and many of the people had come to console Martha and Mary in their loss. **20** When Martha got word that Jesus was coming, she went to meet him. But Mary stayed in the house. **21** Martha said to Jesus, “Lord, if only you had been here, my brother would not have died. **22** But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask.”

23 Jesus told her, “Your brother will rise again.”

24 “Yes,” Martha said, “he will rise when everyone else rises, at the last day.”

25 Jesus told her, “I am the resurrection and the life.[e] Anyone who believes in me will live, even after dying. **26** Everyone who lives in me and believes in me will never ever die. Do you believe this, Martha?”

John 11:17-26 (NLT)

34 “Where have you put him?” he asked them.

They told him, “Lord, come and see.” **35** Then Jesus wept. **36** The people who were standing nearby said, “See how much he loved him!” **37** But some said, “This man healed a blind man. Couldn’t he have kept Lazarus from dying?”

John 11:34-37 (NLT)

Lazarus is dead.

Not mostly dead.

Not nearly dead.

Four days in the tomb.

Martha and Mary are grieving. Confused. Hurt.

They believe Jesus could have done something, but He didn’t arrive on time.

Before Jesus raises Lazarus, He enters the pain.

*This is what divine love looks like: **present, personal, and powerful.***

The raising of Lazarus is an example for all of us of what it is like to live in Christ, and hold to the truth of his word that we will never die.

All of this is an expression of His love for us; he has died so that we never have to.

There is no greater love than to lay down one's life for one's friends.

John 15:13 (NLT)

1. LOVE CAME DOWN TO US.

Why talk like this at Christmas? Because there can be no resurrection without death, no death without birth.

God didn't shout love from heaven — He stepped into the graveyard.

“The LORD is gracious and compassionate, slow to get angry and filled with unfailing love.”

Psalm 145:8 (NLT)

God's love has always been relational and rescuing.

“God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners.”

Romans 5:8 (NLT)

Jesus didn't wait for people to improve.

He didn't wait for Lazarus to come out first.

Love moved toward death, not away from it.

Jesus walks into a place that smells like death and speaks life.

That's the gospel: love moves toward brokenness to bring rescue.

The manger leads to the cross — and both declare the same message:

You are deeply loved.

2. LOVE DEFEATS DEATH.

Advent isn't only about a birth — it's about a victory.

Standing in front of the tomb, Jesus declares:

“I am the resurrection and the life. Anyone who believes in me will live, even after dying.”

John 11:25 (NLT)

Then He proves it.

“He will swallow up death forever!”

— Isaiah 25:8 (NLT)

Death was never meant to be permanent.

It was always meant to be defeated.

“For God so loved the world... that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.”

John 3:16 (NLT)

Love didn't just comfort humanity, love confronted death and won.

Jesus calls Lazarus by name.

Death releases its grip.

Love speaks louder than the grave.

Jesus was born so death wouldn't have the final word — not over Lazarus, not over us.

3. LOVE INVITES US INTO NEW LIFE.

When Lazarus walks out, Jesus says something often overlooked:

“Unwrap him and let him go!”

John 11:44 (NLT)

Resurrection leads to restoration. New life requires old things to come off.

“I will give you a new heart, and I will put a new spirit in you.”

Ezekiel 36:26 (NLT)

God’s love always transforms from the inside out.

“Anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!”

2 Corinthians 5:17 (NLT)

Love doesn’t just raise you, it re-forms you.

Lazarus didn’t return to the tomb. He walked into a new future.

That’s what love invites us into, a new way of living.

The love that saves is the love that restores.

*Jesus was **born** so we could be **reborn**.*

He came down into death so we could rise into life.

This season, may you know the love that:

- stepped into your pain
- defeated your death
- and invites you into new life

“Born that man no more may die.”

This is not just a lyric; it is the gospel.

And it is for you.

