



"And this is the commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God should love his brother also." 1 John 4: 21

Sunday – July 26, 2026

To Know Christ...

There is nothing new under the sun. (Ecclesiastes 1:9) Solomon was not referring to technology, inventions, or "innovations" being constructed out of elements God created. He aimed the thought straight at 'people are still people.' Self-Centered souls certainly existed both then and today. The self-seeking mindset is the most common response to situations in life, even among religious people. (Ouch, that stung!) Consider John 11 ... after Jesus had raised Lazarus from the dead, a group of chief priests and Pharisees convened a council. (v47-53) "If we let Him [Jesus] go on like this, all men will believe in Him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation." Who were these religious leaders concerned about FIRST? God's Nation? God's Place? Not at all. What about *our* place & *our* nation? They thought, 'If we let Jesus continue like this,' everyone will believe in Him, and where will that leave us? "So from that day on they planned together to kill Him [Jesus]." Were they considering taking up the mantle of filling the sandals of Jesus to feed the neglected, heal the sick, stand in truth, and raise the dead? NO, HOW LUDACRIST! They did not want to take over His ministry; they simply desired to keep their place in society under Roman jurisdiction. They were not concerned about those Jesus served; they were all about SELF!

Look at the lengths this selfish mindset took these Jewish religious leaders. In John 12:10-11 it is written, "But the chief priests planned to put Lazarus to death also; because on account of him many of the Jews were going away and were believing in Jesus." Now, not only do they plan to kill Jesus, but also to kill Lazarus because he is a living testament to the power of Jesus over death. Perhaps the most powerful display of Jesus' authority over death to that point in time, and the chief priests and Jewish religious leaders want to erase them both. Wonder what they would consider doing to all those who witnessed the events of Lazarus' resurrection? How selfish!

Jesus said in the Sermon on the Mount, "Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you." (Matthew 5:10-12) Did Lazarus realize that his reward would be great and eternal if he would rejoice and be glad? Have you ever suffered for doing what is righteous among the self-

centered religious souls? Can you rejoice and be glad, having your focus on the great eternal reward? The rest of Lazarus' life is not mentioned in Scripture, but there is an inscription engraved at a tomb on the island of Cyprus (Larnaca) that reads "Lazarus, Four Days Dead, Friend of Christ". If this history is accurate, Lazarus had to flee Palestine for his life, but he served Jesus for the next 30 years until his death. He found joy in suffering for Christ to the extent that those who made the engraving recognized him as a 'Friend of Christ'. From Jesus' mouth, "You are My friends if you do what I command you." (John 15:14) Will you joyfully suffer for your friend, the Lord Jesus Christ? The reward is eternally great in the kingdom of Heaven for the selfless!

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