

UNBOUND: BE MOVED TO ACT



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The raising of Lazarus is described by scholars of the gospel of John as the seventh sign, a sign being a place where heaven and earth intersect, an event that points to the divinity and character of Jesus.

One of the first things to notice is how deeply Jesus is affected by the death of Lazarus, even though Jesus has arrived with the intention of raising Lazarus from the dead. *Jesus wept!* (John 11:35)

Jesus is deeply moved (John 11: 38) - literally, groaned violently, shaken to the depths of his being - deeply moved,

Jesus identifies with our pain and grief. He embraced his humanity and felt the loss; he understands loss, grieving, and pain.

Jesus turned to Mary and Martha in their hurting and he turns to us in ours. The cross is Jesus' ultimate response to the pain, hurt and heartbreak of our lives. Yet, Jesus did not simply express his hurt..."*moved with compassion*"...he moved to the tomb to raise his friend, Lazarus.



MOVED TO FIGHT

The church for the most part has done a lot of talking about addiction.

Who is to blame?

Is it a medical or a moral problem?

It is time for us to be moved, like Jesus, with compassion, to help fight this plague. It is time for us to pray, to witness, to stop looking down our nose at those Jesus is calling us to extend out a hand of help and fellowship.

Why should we? - Because, we will be tested on it!

Remember when the teacher said, "*you might see this again.*"

Jesus gives us the answers to what is going to be on the test of the Judgement Day in Matt. 25:31-46.

Whatever you did for the least of these you did for me, those struggling with addiction are the least of these.

Jesus said when we help those who are struggling, who cannot pay us back, we are honoring him.

Note the miracle of Lazarus'

resurrection is said to be done by

Jesus so people will believe (John

11:42). Our participation in Jesus'

healing works has an impact on

the faith of the surrounding

witnesses. If the churches of

Gaston County begin to work in a greater way to help the addicted, it will be a powerful witness to the Lordship of Christ.

The church is called by Christ to be a community of healing and hope. All addictions cause people to isolate themselves through shame, fear and pain. We need to bring people into the original mutual support group, the church, the body, the hands and feet of Christ. We cannot do that if we let these stigmas stand. If we say that some sins are OK to bring to church and others are not.

We also want you to notice we are called to unwrap the bandages that bind the addict and restrict them from the life Jesus desires for them to live. It may not be pleasant work. The people may carry the stink of sin and death (some really stink not only of sin but the odor of neglect and sickness).

We cannot solve all the problems of addiction in our county. However, we are called to loosen, unbind, and assist those bound in darkness, and help them walk into the light as Jesus did Lazarus.

If Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, he could have easily rolled back the stone and caused the bandages to fall off Lazarus. However, he gave those tasks to his disciples, his followers - US!

He who is kind to the poor lends to the Lord, and he will reward him for what he has done. - Proverbs 19:17.



It's time to loosen the bandages, roll back the stone, and be moved to use faith and prayer to fight addiction in Gaston County!