

Our Genuine Friend

“When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, He groaned in the spirit, and was troubled . . . Jesus wept” (John 11:33, 35).

Our oldest grandson, Thomas, used to think he was a cowboy. Of course, we fueled the fire by buying him cowboy related items. One day, as he came through the house wearing his cowboy hat, cowboy vest, cowboy boots, with a couple of play guns strapped on him, I said, “Thomas, you’re a genuine cowboy!” He stopped and responded, “Pawpaw, I’m not a gennyine cowboy; I’m a real cowboy!”

I laughed then and I’m laughing now. For, as you know, one of the meanings of the word “real” is “genuine, not artificial.” In that light, the two terms are synonymous and are thus often used interchangeably. Basically, my grandson and I were talking about the same subject, but, to be honest, Thomas was neither a real nor a genuine cowboy. He was only one in his mind, his appearance, and actions.

The Lord Jesus Christ is not just acting as a friend or merely playing a part. Jesus is “Our Genuine Friend.” Or, to say it the other way, He is our real Friend! He is the Friend of “sinners” (Luke 7:34). He is the Friend “that sticketh closer than a brother” (Prov. 18:24). He is the Friend which “loveth at all times” (Prov. 17:17). In no setting is His friendship more vividly illustrated than in John 11, the setting of our meditation.

As our Friend, the Lord Jesus genuinely hears our plea for help! Although He did not come to Bethany immediately, Jesus did hear Mary’s and Martha’s desperate cry (see 11:3, 4). In fact, He told His disciples that He was going to “awake” Lazarus “from sleep” (11:11). While Jesus may not do everything according to our plans, we can be assured that He listens to our feeble petitions and He will come to assist us.

As our Friend, the Lord Jesus genuinely feels our hurt and pain! Not only did Jesus come to the Bethany household in their hour of grief, but “He groaned in the spirit, and was troubled” (11:33). Also, it is stated that, “Jesus wept” (11:35). The truth is, dear heart, that Jesus, our great High Priest, is “touched with the feeling of our infirmities” (Heb. 4:15). Having a heart for His Own, He sympathizes and empathizes with us in our times of sorrow.

As our Friend, the Lord Jesus genuinely cares about our present and our future! Once Jesus had miraculously raised Lazarus from the dead, He then commanded, “Loose him and let him go” (11:44). Mary and Martha not only got Lazarus back, but they got him back full of life. Similarly, Jesus is able to put life back in our lifeless experiences.

With these reminders, may we trust “Our Genuine Friend” with all our hearts!