Jesus Loved Martha, Her Sister, Lazarus (and me)

Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus.
John 11:5

Some versions enclose this verse in parenthesis- almost as if John whispered under his breath, “Oh, by the way, Jesus loved these three people.”

I think to myself, *doesn’t Jesus love everybody?* But I doubt the verse would have as much power if John would say, “Oh by the way Jesus loved Martha, and her sister and Lazarus ***like he does everybody else.”*** The way John said it excites me, even though the syntax is clumsy and some could accuse John of overstating the obvious.

Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus.

Let’s look at this verse closer.

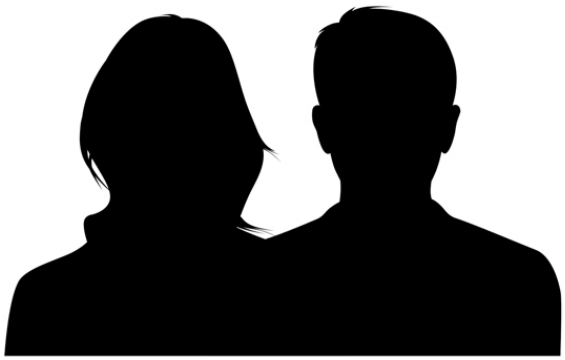
Now Jesus loved Martha.

.*Jesus loves the people he rebukes.*

It’s interesting to note that the timeline places this story after Martha’s conniption fit in the kitchen when she was left alone with the dirty dishes and Palmolive. Jesus rebuked her that day for obsessing over workload issues. The implication here is that **Jesus loves those He rebukes**. I feel the discipline of God often, but during those times I must remember that Jesus disciplines the ones He loves. So Jesus loves me. Trust me. He ***really*** loves me.

Jesus loved her sister.

.Jesus loves the annonymous.



John refers to Mary, but he ***doesn't*** mention her name. Obviously, John knew Mary but perhaps he didn't want to confuse the reader because there's a trio of Marys in the Gospel narrative. Now if I were John I would have written, "Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister, Mary and Lazarus."

But no. Mary only gets a token "her sister" in the Book.

This tells me that God loves the anonymous. The ones whose names will never appear in print. There is a blessing- a tremendous blessing in remaining hidden. We should thank God for hiddenness because in truth, there are real danger in the value of our name. Maybe we should pray in those moments that our names don't appear in the credits of the latest event or ministry, "Lord, I ***really*** thank You for keeping my name hidden for another day."

Jesus loved Lazarus.



- **Jesus loves the sick.**

And then there is Lazarus. At this point in the narrative, Lazarus is sick. Deathly ill… John says, Jesus loves Lazarus.

It's so easy for Christians to:

- believe in karma
- and if we experience illness, that somehow it's what we had coming
- and if Jesus really loved us then we wouldn't be sick, disabled or isolated.

The words of the TV preachers echo through our being-"If you have enough faith, then you would be well. But this is not true. Jesus loved Lazarus." Think about it. How much faith did Lararus have? Well, he died. A dead body can't have faith. They're dead! But Jesus has a mind of his own. He knows what he's up to and He doesn't need anybody's help.

It think God would give us permission to add a couple of words to the end of this verse:

Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus and (state your name).

I am so glad that Jesus loves me. That he loves the one He's rebuking, the ones who remain anonymous and the ones who are sick. Chances are you'll experience a couple of these this

year. So remember this verse. You'll need it. *He loves you.*