

Helen Barbara CAMMISH – memorial and thanksgiving.

(Helen was – now Helen is).

21 April_1954 – 04 February_2019 (Aged 64)

Helen was so many things to each and all of us. Very briefly I want to talk about **friendship**. Helen was friend to many of us. Not just any old friend but a friend of character, kindness and reliability. (The flip chart and the Memory Book...)

What does Jesus think about friendship? *John 11: 1 – 44.* Jesus wept – at the death of his friend Lazarus and he knows how we grieve. (2019 Lazarus come out. Image below)

To follow Jesus – to be a disciple of Jesus means becoming a friend of God (the ultimate community – God is totally One and Jesus told his friends that he no longer called them servants but friends *John 15: 15*). Jesus in discussion with the Father and the Spirit chose to become human and vulnerable and his friendships particularly with the family at Bethany – Martha, Mary and Lazarus were of great importance to him – especially towards the end of his earthly life when he faced the reality of an early death.

In John's Gospel the story is told, and the sisters send an urgent message to Jesus, *Lord – your dear friend Lazarus is ill.* (v3) **CONTINUE STORY HERE>>>**

Jesus delays a further 2 days – many discussions about why. (Was it the threat that he'd be arrested or was it because he knew Lazarus would die but also what he planned to do to demonstrate his power to raise the dead).

V4 This has happened in order to bring glory to god, and it will be the means by which the Son of God will receive glory.

V5 Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. (Wonderful statement and discovery when we begin to realise that although human friendships are vital to each of us – that we too can experience being loved by Jesus).

When Jesus did decide to travel to see Jesus he said. *V11 Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I will go and wake him up...v13 Jesus meant that Lazarus had died.*

When he got to Bethany, he faced the recrimination of Lazarus' family – that he hadn't got there earlier because they thought/knew that *v21 Mary said to Jesus, If you had been here, Lord, my brother, would not have died!*

V23 Your brother will rise to life, Jesus told her.

Then followed a short discussion about the Resurrection Day of the Messiah when ALL – believers and unbelievers will be raised bodily to come face to face with God. Martha believed that day would surely come but she wanted Lazarus her brother alive now. Jesus wanted her to face Resurrection now and not just some future point.

V25 Jesus said to her, I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me will live even though they die; and those who live and believe in me will never die. Do you believe this?

They went to see where Lazarus was buried...

*V35 Jesus wept. See how much he loved him! the people said. **Wept for every death.***

*Deeply moved once more, Jesus went to the tomb....take the stone away (Martha objected because he'd been dead 4 days) but Jesus insists and talks with the Father and then cries in a loud voice, **LAZARUS, COME OUT.** He comes out with his hands and feet tied in grave clothes and a cloth over his face. *Untie him and let him go,* says Jesus.*



Jesus loved the family of friends at Bethany – he also loves us and wants us to be more than servants of God but also his friends with whom he shares his plans.

We are not worthy of this but this Easter we will reflect upon and what Jesus needed to do to make our resurrection possible. This was a great day when Jesus demonstrated his power – but we do need to remember that Lazarus lived but only to die again.

But because of the bodily resurrection of Jesus who is alive for ever more we too who believe and receive Jesus into our lives can experience bodily resurrection and ongoing life with God when we die.

Many people loved and appreciated Helen. But there is one who loves her more than any – the Lord Jesus loves her most. I feel we have been privileged to share Helen for a time but that she belongs to Jesus and he has taken her home.

Helen WAS – but now Helen IS.

Helen is safe and free of pain.

Helen has not ceased to exist.

Helen is "*absent from the body but she is present with the LORD*" (2C 5: 8).

Helen may "sleep", but she is going to receive a resurrection body – she is not drifting around as a spirit without a body.

God is not limited by time as we are in earthly form. Helen is with the Lord Jesus who declares that he is *making everything new*. (Rev 21:5) And we will see her in the *new heaven and new earth* when this dying earth and heaven cease to be – at the return of Jesus.

Helen was with us but now Helen is with the Lord. She is with GOD who is the I AM.

Let us give thanks for her life but also her resurrection life.

Jane Thorington-Hassell.