

## **Too late**

John 11:1-44

April 10, 2011

When is it too late?

When the train has left the station?

When you click send and that angry email hastily composed in the heat of the moment is launched into cyberspace?

When the heirloom porcelain lamp hits the floor?

When the front door clicks shut and you realize you've left your keys on the kitchen counter?

When you finally decide you can go to the game only to find it's been sold out?

When you see the blue lights flashing in your rearview mirror?

When the candy bar you could have shared with your wife is -- let's just say -- gone, gone, gone?

When is it too late?

When he's left you for another woman?

When you've burned all your bridges?

When the prison door slams shut?

When is it too late?

When you've said the words you can't take back, and the friendship that was, is history?

When you've drifted apart, too far apart, when your interests and passions and values have moved in very different directions, when the love is gone, and there is nothing to do to put the marriage back together again?

When you know that whatever she promises, or whatever you might wish, she'll never change?

When is it too late?

When you've come too far, when habits and routines and choices and expectations have become almost second nature, and you don't have the energy or the desire or even the ability to change course?

When you've been hurt, badly, when you've been betrayed, cruelly, and you are never, never, going to put yourself in that position again?

When you're old, too old to change, too old to try anything new, too old to even think about how you might want to change your life or work on an estranged relationship or grow your faith?

When you've made a mistake, a mistake with far-reaching consequences, when you've sinned, maybe not an unforgivable sin, but certainly an inexcusable sin, a sin you cannot leave behind, a sin those you have hurt cannot leave behind?

When is it too late?

Was it too late from the beginning, because of the family into which you were born, because of the genetic material you inherited, because of the destructive and self-destructive coping mechanisms that were built into your psyche right from the start?

When is it too late?

When centuries and centuries of enmity and accumulated insult and ingrained prejudice make meaningful reconciliation and lasting peace impossible?

When the illness is too far advanced and the doctors have no more answers?

When the flood waters have swept your house off its foundation and you see your life floating down the street?

When you've already spent a lifetime calling your own shots, ignoring God?

When is it too late?

Martha said, *If you had been here, Lord, my brother would not have died!* She believed. She knew who Jesus was and she knew what Jesus could do, but it was too late.

Mary said, *Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died!* She believed. She knew who Jesus was and she knew what Jesus could do, but it was too late.

The mourners said, *He gave sight to the blind man, didn't he? Could he not have kept Lazarus from dying?* They saw God's power at work when Jesus gave sight to the man born blind. They believed Jesus could have done something to help Lazarus, to heal the illness that led to his death, but it was too late.

It was too late. Lazarus was dead.

It was too late, wasn't it?

*Lazarus, come forth!*

And he did!