

## Needy Week 5

Welcome to Week 5 of our series called Needy. We're all needy. Though God is self-sufficient and doesn't need anything, we, on the other hand, do.

We have physical, emotional and spiritual needs. God created us with needs. He gives us the responsibility to tend to those needs.

That may sound kind of selfish, but it's just common sense. We can't help anybody until we've taken care of ourselves and if we don't take care of ourselves then we will become someone else's problem.

And so when we tend to our needs, we can be more effective in serving others. Jesus tells us:

*'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'*

Mark 12

Even our ability to love others rests first and foremost on our love and care for ourselves.

So, we're taking this season of Lent to take a closer look at just how needy we really are. We are looking at how to best meet those needs and, as a result, how to be healthier.

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Over the course of this series we've been looking at some specific needs that we all have.

We talked about our need for God. Made in His image and likeness, it's in our DNA to want to be with Him.

Last week, we spoke about our need for humility and our need for healing from pride.

We also need healing from the wounds inflicted on us by others. So many hurts are beyond our control and need God's healing.

We also need healing because of our own choices, that have led to self-inflicted pain.

We talked about our need for work and for our need for rest. We need to be productive and we need to rest from the burdens that our busy, distracted lives place upon us.

If you've missed any of our talks in this message series, you can go to our website and read them there. Just go to [gslakeshore.com](http://gslakeshore.com)

The need we're talking about today is very different than the other needs we've looked at so far.

And it may sound strange because it's at odds to the wisdom of society. It's what I would call a Divine Paradox.

To help us get started we're going to look at a passage from John's Gospel today.

Martha and Mary are grieving the loss of their brother Lazarus. The women are upset that Jesus didn't arrive sooner to save their brother from death. But Jesus tells them:

*“Your brother will rise again” and later He says,  
“I am the resurrection and the life.”*

John Chapter 11

Martha and Mary are challenged to see beyond physical death and see things from an “eternal” perspective. And understandably, in their grief, they were still at the tomb.

Death is a way of life and Death is the way to life. But in our humanity, we cling to this life that God gives us because this life is precious to us.

Jesus tells us in John Chapter 12:

*“Unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.”*

We can also see this theme in our own lives as well. We know that:

- If we want to get in shape and have a healthier body, we have to die to our love of

burgers and fries...right?... and start working out.

- If we want to get out of debt , we have to die to spending and start saving.
- If we want to get better grades in school, we have to die to our leisure pursuits and spend more time studying.

We find over and over again that a certain kind of death is required to bring something else to life. And so, in dying to ourselves, we discover life.

This Divine Paradox is at work each and every day of our lives, and is inherent to the whole of human life.

A friend of ours once shared with us the day her teenage son died in a car accident. This was such a tragedy and I could see the deep pain in her eyes as she told us this story. It was so obvious how much she missed her son.

But there was something else there as well. She also experienced great hope because she was sure that she would see him again. She was, and still is, utterly convinced that he is with Jesus, the healer of our souls.

Whoever believes in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. John 11

And so we need to die to ourselves and our selfish behaviors. We die to ourselves every time we think of someone else's pain; when we put their needs over ours. We die to ourselves each time we put the needs of our parents, our siblings, or a stranger before our own needs. In this dying to self, we bring new life, not only to someone else, but also to ourselves.

This reminds me of a profound exchange I witnessed while in Haiti some years ago. One of my fellow travelers had a loaf of bread in his backpack. He was taking it back to our guest

house to share at supper time. We came across an elderly woman on the street who couldn't have been more than 75 pounds. He took the loaf of bread and gave it to her.

She took it gratefully, and turning to the woman behind her, she broke it in two and gave her half. That's what dying to self, sacrificing, and giving life to another is all about.

And so, what is it that God is calling us to give up? How is he asking us to die to self? What things draw us away from Him; what distractions do we use to fill up our day instead of making time to talk and to LISTEN to the voice of God?

Think for a moment of all the things we do to please ourselves each day.... all the comforts we have..... all the excess that we own.

Are we living our lives with things that keep us from being our better, healthier, selves? Are the things in our lives keeping us from being a

better parent or spouse? Are they keeping us from doing something important? Are they keeping us from serving God and others?

We need to die to that part of us that avoids pain at all costs, that part of us that keeps us from growing in ways we know we could and should.

If you're struggling with the knowledge that you need to die to something, then good for you!

I say that because you may be on the verge of a breakthrough. Sometimes the biggest moments of change come when we're struggling with something.

Where is God calling you to die to yourself, so that a better version of you can come to life?

What do you need to surrender and give to God? What is it that you know you need to do?

Now is the time to think about this, in these final weeks of Lent.

When we die to sin and selfishness, really what is dying is our lesser self, our **false self**, so that the true self, the **true you** can come to life.

Today is all about new life. May we come to understand that only in dying to self will we truly find new life.

And may we also come to understand that our greatest need, really, all of our need, is for

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