



Jesus weeps over Lazarus.

When His friend Lazarus died, "Jesus wept" (John 11:35). In the Holy Gospel it is abundantly clear that God Incarnate had friends and valued friendship. Jesus is our Exemplar. We should imitate Him, and He wants us to practice friendship. Jesus knows that wholesome friendship is good for us. Indeed, He understands human nature better than we do.

Meanwhile, during the Third Age of Middle-earth ...

Sauron has decided to attack Minas Tirith. Before the gates of the city, the brave Captain Faramir and his men are being attacked by "Black Riders of the air," as Pippin calls them. No one seems to be willing to help Faramir, except Beregond.

With that Beregond sprang away and ran off into the gloom [to help Faramir]. Ashamed of his terror, while Beregond of the Guard thought first of the captain *whom he loved*, Pippin got up and peered out. . . .

Pippin pressed forward as they passed under the lamp beneath the gate-arch, and when he saw the pale face of Faramir he caught his breath. It was the face of one who had been assailed by a great fear or anguish, but had mastered it and now is quiet. . . . He knew now why Beregond [Pippin's friend] spoke his name with love. *He was a captain that men would follow*, that he would follow, even under the shadow of the black wings.<sup>2</sup>

May we have as much love for Jesus, our Savior and Friend!



<sup>1</sup> John 11:35

<sup>2</sup> J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Return of the King* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1994) 76-78.