

Lazarus had two sisters and he spent part of his life dead, tied up, and confined in a small space. When Jesus heard about the condition of his friend, he said, “This illness is not to end in death, but it is for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified through it.” Lazarus went through death so that we could take delight in how God meant the world to be.

Steve Bertrand also had two sisters. He was an avid reader, an accomplished student, a distinguished graduate, a lover of fine art, a scientist, an inventor, a philosopher, a lobbyist, a motivational speaker, a humorist, and a friend. He was able to make you laugh. He was able to make you cry. He was also able to drive you crazy. Steve was so able that when you heard people talk about the disabled, you figured they meant somebody else.

Steve wondered about things, and he asked you about them, and if you didn't give a very thorough answer, he would ask you about them some more. He wanted to understand how things worked, and to think up ways to make them work better. Steve never paid much attention to limitations: One of his favorite books was *How to Think Like Leonardo da Vinci*. He had underlined the passages that said wisdom and light triumph over fear and darkness; that you should go on a never-ending quest for truth and beauty; that Leonardo was known for his logic, imagination, reason, romance, science and art - that he was a beacon of wholeness, a man who created, who embodied what it was to be made in the image of a creator.

Steve's body looked like it had been made in the image of the crucified Christ. But his mind and heart were made in the image of our Creator. Many people took one look at Steve, saw that his legs didn't work, that his mouth didn't work, and they presumed his mind didn't work. Oh, but it did.

Steve trusted that he was what God meant him to be. He once told Cathy, “I thank God daily that I am the way I am.” He thanked God. Steve believed this was the only way he could have been the person he was meant to be. He said otherwise he would have been less attentive to the needs of others. Isaiah says those who trust God “will soar as with eagle's wings; they will run and not grow weary; they will walk and never tire.” That was Steve.

In this gospel, Martha and Mary, the two sisters, had every right to complain. Lazarus their brother had died an untimely death. But they were not focused on resurrection; they were focused on loss, on their limitations, on their own disabilities. We all get that way. We ask God why some friends leave us, why we look the way we do, why we don't have more influence, more resources, why our kids don't have better judgment, why we can't get promoted, why we can't walk, run or fly. We don't always thank God for the way we are, for the limitations we have and what they reveal to us.

Jesus is prepared to use us if we will give him what we have. What we have is for God's glory, not for ours. All we have to do is take delight in what God meant us to be.