

# The Gospel Unashamed

"From the cowardice that shrinks from new truth, from the laziness that is content with half-truths, from the arrogance that thinks it knows all truth, O, God of Truth, deliver us."

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~ All articles are written by Terry Carter unless otherwise stated ~

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Terry Carter, Editor

## "Come Lilly, Come on Girl, Up!"

By Dr. Shane Capps



Do you ever wish the last day could be the first day? I sure do.

On Tuesday April 23, 2024, that is exactly how I felt. That was the day we had to put down our 120lbs Saint Bernard Lilly. The vet had called me at 8:50 a.m. at my office. She said, "I heard you all are having a hard time with Lilly." I told her that Lilly had been licking and chewing her paws constantly, had been throwing up, and many other problems. She just could not settle down because she was feeling so bad. The vet and I agreed that she needed to be put down, and it was determined that Vicki and I would bring her in at 4:45 p.m. that day.

I left the office after 9 a.m.; I wanted to spend the rest of the day with Lilly. As I was driving home that morning, I was thinking about the first day we saw her. She was at a pet store in Kokomo, IN. She was two months old and only weighed thirteen pounds. I had never seen a Saint Bernard puppy before. I picked her up and gave her a hug. Then, I looked at Vicki and said those famous words that changed our lives, "Do you think we can do this?" The next day, January 7, 2020, I paid for her and brought her home. We had no clue what we were getting into.

That evening, I called and told my great friend Rad Warder that I had gotten a Saint Bernard. He laughed for fifteen minutes. When I told him that we may breed her, he laughed even harder. To this day, I have never heard anyone laugh that long in my life.

All joking aside, it was a lot of work. Lilly was nipping at us, digging in the yard, and she was not potty trained.

Lilly did not stay thirteen pounds for very long! We played with her all the time. I took her for walks which we called "walkies." We let her run throughout the whole church building. Don't tell the church people, but she peed twice on the floor as a puppy. Yes, we cleaned it up. We also played a lot in her fenced in yard. She loved playing ball. If the ball squeaked, she loved it more. She grew quickly! But no matter how big she grew, I always looked at Lilly as that little thirteen-pound puppy.

Like her dad, Lilly earned her degrees. She went to Petco for her Basic dog training. It was there that she learned to come, sit, focus, lay down, stay, leave it, loose leash walking, hide and seek, touch, and wait. After that, we took her to PetSmart for her Intermediate and Advanced classes. It was there that she worked on heel, stay, sit, drop it, leave it, and stay with distractions.

Did the training work? She was stubborn no doubt, but Lilly knew her commands. She was a great dog. She also knew

phrases like, “you want to play”, “you want to go for a walkie”, “you want to go bye bye” and “go night night”.

The problem was that Lilly was a sick dog. We brought her home with giardia from the pet store. As she was getting bigger, we had to deal with urinary tract infections. She always had a bad stomach. She always wanted to eat grass and get sick. One day, she could have good BM, and the next day, it was diarrhea. Other times, she would shake her ears so that we had to put drops in them.

For the last four months, she had been licking and biting her paws all the time. It grew worse and worse. She would chew on her paws for three hours in the morning. My son and his wife told me that, while we were gone, she would just sit in her crate and chew herself to death. It was getting to where her paws were bleeding and swollen, and she was limping all the time.

In February, we took Lilly to her vet for her four-year checkup. We told the vet about the licking and biting, and the vet said that she was just grooming. Really? No, try again! The vet told us that our real problem was going to be over the next two years because Lilly was developing hip and joint problems. She was already having a hard time getting up.

Over the next two months, the licking and biting worsened. Lilly was struggling to stand up. I would say to her, “You want to play”, and she would not get up. Before we went to bed, she did not want to get up to go to the bathroom one last time.

On April 16, we took Lilly to a different vet. She reviewed Lilly’s records and noticed that Lilly had had a lot of problems. The vet really did not know what to do. She also told us that Lilly was developing hip and joint problems and arthritis. Again, over the next two years, we were going to have a problem.

Yes, I understood Lilly was going to have additional problems over the next two years, but what about the problem today?

I arrived home shortly after 9:00 a.m. I took Lilly outside, gave her a drink of water, and gave her a bone. Then, I took her for a short walk, and she had to sit down to rest twice. It seemed that she was having trouble breathing the last two days. Vicki and I spent the whole day, talking to Lilly, petting her, and loving on her. At 3:30 p.m., I took her outside one last time, gave her a drink of water, and gave her half of a bone. It was raining.

On the way to the vet’s, Lilly just laid on Vicki’s lap. Ever since she was a puppy, whenever we took Lilly anywhere, Vicki always sat in the back with her. When we parked in the parking lot, she

started crying. She never did that before. As we waited in the waiting room, she barked at anyone who came near to us. She never did that before. Vicki and I just kept loving on her.

When we walked into the room, Lilly wanted to leave, but I told her we needed to stay. We just kept loving on her. The vet gave Lilly a shot to calm her down. Finally, Lilly lay down like the picture at the top of this article and just kept looking up at me.

We continued telling Lilly we loved her, and it was time to go night night. I always said that to her every night when we came in before bed. It was not long until Lilly was sleeping and snoring like she always did every night next to our bed. After ten minutes, the vet came in and gave her one last shot. *Lilly died.* My giant girl was gone just like that. As she lay there, we kept petting her and crying. I just kept thinking, no, it cannot be true. No, it cannot be over. No, this cannot be it. It was just like that. In a moment our life changed again.

To be honest, over the four and half years we had her, Lilly was a lot of work. At times, she was a lot of stress. At times, she was more than I could handle. There were days when I did not know how I could live with her, and now, I do not know how to live without her. It was not a hate/love relationship. She was my girl. She was just a lot, but I loved her just the same. Never once did I think about giving her up. Vicki and I loved her

and enjoyed her. Lilly taught me a lot about what love looks like.

The day after her death, I reached out to a friend, and the words he gave me are simple and deep. Shane... **“So sorry to hear about your loss. It’s so deep and painful. It hurts. It’s supposed to hurt. Much love to you.”**

Love is hard. Love is a lot of work. Love can bring a lot of stress. Love brings loss. Love is deep. Love is painful. Love hurts. At times, love is hard to handle. Love is supposed to hurt.

Winnie the Pooh said, “How lucky am I to have something that makes saying goodbye so hard.”

Our Lord showed us that He loves us.

John 3:16 says, “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.”

Jesus gave us the best example of love. He did not merely say “I love you”; He showed us that He loved us by dying on the cross in our place.

John 12:32 says, “And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to Myself.”

In pain and agony on the cross, Jesus could say “Father, forgive them; for they do not

know what they are doing.”  
Luke 23:34a

The Lord loves us. Love brought Him pain, stress, and it cut deep. Was it worth it? Was it worth loving us? Were the pain and stress worth it?

Romans 5:6 says, “For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly.”

Romans 5:8 says, “But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”

Love hurts! Love is a funny thing! Lilly reminded me that we only have so much time to love. We only have so much time with our husband or wife. We only have so much time with our parents or grandparents. We only have so much time with our kids and grandkids. We only have so much time with Saint Bernard’s.

How do you say goodbye to a wife after thirty, forty, or fifty years of spending every day together? How do you say goodbye to a child who was in a car accident and died? How do you say goodbye to a good friend who lost their fight with cancer?

If they were a Christian, then knowing where they are can make it is easier. However, losing someone you love is hard, and it hurts. It cuts deep. We need to focus on our relationships and love those

that God has given us like today could be the last. Sadly, it just may be!

God loved us enough that He was willing to send His Son down to this earth. He was willing to allow His Son to die on the cross. He is the one who raised Jesus from the dead on the third day. That is love. The Father loved His Son! He also loves you and me. That is why salvation is now offered to everyone.

That is why today is the day of salvation. That is why today you can have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. What do you say? In fact, you do not even have to get drool on you. I would not mind!

Do you ever wish the last day could be the first day? I sure do.



Lilly Capps

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Daddy and Mommy love you girl!

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