

6.10.18 ~ John 11:17-36, "Jesus Wept."

Last week we ended with Jesus telling His disciples that He needed to go to Bethany to wake Lazarus up, which of course, the disciples didn't understand, so Jesus said plainly, "Lazarus is dead!"

Read John 11:17-19... After a day's travel, Jesus was approaching the village of Bethany which is about two miles outside of Jerusalem. As noted, Lazarus had been in the tomb for four days when Jesus arrived in the vicinity of Bethany.

Many of the Jews had come from Jerusalem to support Mary and Martha in the death of their brother Lazarus; it would seem that this family was well known in the community, as most deaths wouldn't rate a visit from the Jewish religious leaders.

It will ultimately be providential for these Jewish leaders [no doubt some of the enemies of Jesus], to be there when Jesus calls out Lazarus from the tomb; for then they will in no way be able to deny that Jesus raised a dead man back to life.

During the time of Christ, because on Jewish laws, traditions and customs, a funeral usually took place within 24 hours after the death of a person, followed by a gathering at the mourner's home. The first seven days following the funeral is known as *shiva* [seven], and the mourners generally stay at home, receiving guests who help them mourn their loss, many staying to comfort the surviving family members.

Same day burial was common, as is seen in in **Acts 5:1-10**, where Ananias and his wife Sapphira lied to God, were struck dead, and then carried out and buried.

Read John 11:20-27... Martha and Mary were very different in personality. Martha was busy and dutiful, Mary was sedate and contemplative.

Those suffering the loss of a loved one were consoled by family and friends; Mary is being comforted, Martha goes to meet Jesus as He approaches Bethany.

Martha comes to Jesus and says, "Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died. Even now I know that whatever You ask of God, God will give You." Martha is grieving the loss of her brother, but she is also expressing her faith that Jesus can somehow help them in this tragedy.

Note: We don't know if Martha was aware of the other narratives in Scripture where Jesus raised someone from the dead: in **Luke 7:11-17** the son of a widow, in a town called Nain, was being carried in a coffin when Jesus touched the coffin and commanded the young man to "get up," the dead man set up and began to talk, and the people acknowledged, "God has come to help His people"; in **Luke 8:52-56** the twelve year old daughter of a man named Jairus' had died, and Jesus went to their house and held the hand of the dead girl, saying "My child, get up," her spirit returned and she immediately stood up.

You have to love Jesus' response to Martha here in **verse 23**, telling her, "Your brother will rise again," of course Jesus is speaking of the resurrection of Lazarus that will take place shortly, but Martha doesn't get it; she says she knows "he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day." The Jews believed in the resurrection of the body, it would seem that Martha's concern is that if Jesus had been there He could have healed Lazarus, but now Lazarus is dead.

Jesus affirms, "I am the resurrection and the life, he who believes in Me will live even if he dies, and everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die. Do you believe this?"

Jesus will indeed raise all those who belong to Him, at a future time, but He is going to soon raise Lazarus, proving that He alone is the source of resurrection power, and that physical death does not affect the spiritual life [eternal life] granted to every person who believes in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

Martha responds, "Yes, Lord; I have believed that You are the Christ, the Son of God, *even* He who comes into the world." Martha affirms her faith in the Lord, the One who came into the world to save us from sin's curse.

These accounts are recorded, as John writes (**John 20:31**), "that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name."

Read John 11:28-36... Martha left Jesus to go back to her sister Mary and tell her that Jesus wants to see her; although it is not recorded in the narrative, it is clear that Jesus asked for Mary.

Martha would have wanted to tell this to Mary privately, so as not to raise the suspicion of the Jews who were there, as Martha didn't want to put Jesus in jeopardy by alerting those Jews who hated Him.

We are told that Mary, after being informed by Martha, got up quickly to go to find Jesus, and those who were there comforting her, seeing her get up to leave, went with her, probably thinking that she was going to the tomb to be closer to where her brother was buried.

When Mary arrived at Jesus she fell at His feet saying, "Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died." There were many mourners who evidently came from the house with Mary [Jewish families would hire flute players and professional mourners to loudly and continually cry out in wailing tones, for this was a very solemn occasion].

This had to be hard for Jesus, for He loved this family and neither Mary or Martha had any idea that He was going to raise Lazarus from the dead. Their brother was dead, yet this could have been prevented; they just don't understand why Jesus didn't heal him.

Seeing Mary (**verse 33**) and the others *weeping* [the Greek word used here means to wail or express grief loudly], we are told that Jesus was *deeply moved* in spirit [the Greek word here implies outrage and indignation], Jesus is angry, death was not part of God's plan for creation, but sin brought death to all life.

Jesus was also *troubled* [the Greek word here was also used of Herod when he heard the Magi were looking for the One who had born King of the Jews **Matthew 2:3**]; this word is also used by Jesus later in **John 13:21**, when He tells His disciples (at the Last Supper) that one of them will betray Him.

Being deeply moved and troubled, Jesus asks (**John 11:35**), "Where have you laid him?" Some of those who are with Mary reply, "Lord, come and see."

It would seem that there were a few people there, probably close friends of Mary and Martha, who know Jesus and believe He is the Christ.

We are told now that Jesus wept (shortest verse in the Bible, yet it displays the Lord's connection to and love for humanity). This is very illustrative of what is said about Jesus (the Anointed One, God's Son, Savior) in Isaiah 53:3, that He was "A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." The word translated *wept* (**verse 35**) is a special word that is only used once in the New Testament. It is very different from the word used for *weeping* in **verse 33**, which is more of a loud and outward expression of grief, but the word used here, of Jesus, implies more of a quiet, instantaneous bursting into tears, as the result of a very deep grief caused by the loss of a loved one.

The Jews who witnessed Jesus weeping (**verse 36**) were saying, "See how He loved Lazarus!" These Jews have no idea of the love Jesus has for humankind, and even less of an understanding of the deep deep love Jesus has for those who belong to Him by faith.

Jesus came to die for us, to take our punishment, so that we might be forgiven our sins and made acceptable to the Holy and Righteous God of Creation.

2Corinthians 5:17, "Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come." **21**, "He [God] made Him [Jesus] who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him."

Romans 3:23-24, "for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus."

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

Romans 6:23, "For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Romans 8:1-2, Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death."

Hebrews 9:27-28, "And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment, so Christ also, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time for salvation without reference to sin, to those who eagerly await Him."

1Peter 3:18, "For Christ died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, so that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit."

In next week's lesson Jesus will go to the tomb and call Lazarus out, demonstrating **John 11:25-26**, "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies, and everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die. Do you believe this?"

How about you, do you believe that Jesus is the resurrection and the life? I sure hope so, because it is absolutely true and everyone who believes in Him will live even if they die, and everyone who lives and believes in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord will never die, because they have been given eternal life from God, so that they might belong to Him now, here on earth, and live with Him forever in heaven, for there is nothing that can separate a believer and follower of Christ from God, as Paul declares in **Romans 8:38-39**, "I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Pastor Mike

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