



SERMON NOTES

US N°. 144

Date: May 25th, 2014

Title: When Jesus wept

1. Rain with clouds. Clouds for a while hide the sun, but the sun is not gone; it will shine out again before long. In the meantime, those black clouds are filled with rain, and the blacker they are the more likely they are to yield plentiful showers. Our troubles bring blessings; they are the “*black chariots of bright grace*.” We may be drenched with grief but not drowned in His wrath, and every growing thing will be glad for the shower.
 - a. Precious sayings and promises of Jesus came through the pain of His disciples.
 - i. “*I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.*” Jn. 14:6
 - ii. “*Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.*” Jn. 20:29
 - iii. “*I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?*” Jn. 11:25-26
2. The story of Lazarus et al
 - a. The background of Jesus’ friendship with Lazarus and his sisters. “*Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus.*” Jn. 11:5
 - i. The members of this family were among the few special and intimate friends of Jesus. He was with them often, and showed signs of special friendship (cf. Luke 10:38-42), and they showed upon Him their affection in return.
 - ii. Jesus was fully man and fully God and could have those deep friendships just as we can.
 - b. The Jews had sought to stone Jesus in John 10 so he had gone to other side of the Jordan River where John the Baptist had begun baptizing people. About 20 miles from Bethany where Lazarus lived.
 - c. Lazarus becomes gravely ill.
 - i. Mary and Martha naturally turn to and send for their friend Jesus.
 - ii. Hearing of the sickness Jesus states, “*This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified through it.*” Jn. 11:4 Jesus purposefully waits 2 full days.
 1. Jesus could have healed from a distance like He did for the centurion’s servant (cf. Mt. 8:13)
 2. And His delay in coming allowed Lazarus to die.
 - iii. After the two days, Jesus goes to Bethany potentially placing His life at risk. The disciples comment on the inherent danger to Jesus to return towards Jerusalem, and Jesus responds, “*Are there not twelve hours in the day? If anyone walks in the day, he does not stumble, because he sees the light of this world. But if one walks in the night, he stumbles, because the light is not in him.*”

Read Jn. 11:1-19

1. Ministry is not always safe, but the day grows short therefore we must do what must be done. (cf. 1 Cor. 7:29, Rom. 13:11-12, Eph. 5:16)
2. Thomas' willingness to die with Jesus.
- iv. Jesus explains that Lazarus sleeps, then has to clarify that Lazarus is actually dead.
- v. Jesus puts purpose to Lazarus sickness; it would be for God's glory and good for His disciples.
- vi. Once they arrive, Lazarus had been in the tomb for 4 days there were many people there to comfort Mary & Martha. Due the close proximity of Jerusalem, what happens here is practically center stage religiously and politically (*often one and the same in Israel*).

Read Jn. 11:20-38

d. Jesus arrives at the funeral.

- i. Martha meets Jesus and discusses the resurrection.
 1. The concept of resurrection is not new to Jesus; it had long been a part of Jewish belief.
 2. Jesus makes it personal. *"I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?"* Jn. 11:25-26
- ii. Mary comes to Jesus with her grief and plaint. She's honest with her Teacher.
- iii. Jesus groans in His spirit and is troubled. (cf. Jn. 11:33)
 1. Jesus became angry in spirit and very agitated. Jesus' anger is most likely at death itself and the reign of terror it exercises.
 2. Jesus did not take the suffering His choice caused lightly. *"Though He causes grief, yet He will show compassion according to the multitude of His mercies. For He does not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men."* Lam. 3:33-34
 3. Although Jesus always chooses what will ultimately bring His Father the most glory, sometimes, as in Lazarus' case, it requires affliction and grief – He does not take delight in the affliction and grief itself.
- ! iv. Jesus goes to the tomb and weeps; as opposed to wailing. Why would Jesus weep when He knew that He had come to Bethany for the purpose of raising Lazarus from the dead? Several reasons to consider:
 1. The deep compassion Jesus had for those who suffer. Just because He had just reason to let Lazarus die, does not mean that He took it lightly. Jesus is our compassionate High Priest.
 2. The calamity of sin upon creation. Jesus had come to destroy the works of the devil, one of which is death. (cf. 1 Jn. 3:8) Death had taken Lazarus, and before it was all over it would take him again. Tears of anger and longing were mixed with Jesus' tears of grief.
 3. The cost of sin that he was about to pay for everlasting life. The cross was just days away and no one really knew the inner distress Jesus was experiencing. (cf. Luke 12:50)
- v. Scripture records that He groans within Himself a third time.

Read Jn. 11:39-44

e. Christ responds.

- i. Commands that the stone over the cave be removed.
 1. Martha warns of the stench of rotting flesh; flesh rots and causes revulsion.

2. There are things (attitudes, affections, and atmospheres) that impede the miracle from happening. Removing them sometimes exposes us to the stench of un-holy lives, but is requisite for the full healing to take place.
 3. Scriptures concerning the flesh:
 - a. Gal. 5:17, *"For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish."*
 - b. Rom. 7:23-24, *"But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?"*
 - c. Rom. 8:6, 13, *"For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace... if you live according to the flesh you will die..."*
 4. How many times do we try to conceal our rotting flesh?
- ii. Jesus prays.
1. Jesus knew that His Father always heard Him.
 2. Jesus sets the stage that the purpose of the coming miracle was so that people, not just Lazarus' family, may believe that Jesus was sent by the Father and that they may also have life.
 3. The clear teaching of the Old Testament is that God listens to the righteous, not the unrighteous, except for prayers of repentance. Jn. 9:31, *"Now we know that God does not hear sinners; but if anyone is a worshiper of God and does His will, He hears him."*
- iii. Commands Lazarus to come forth.
1. The Word through whom all was made here speaks forth life. (cf. Jn. 1:1-3)
 2. Those standing around were given tasks to do, such as taking away the stone and unbinding Lazarus. But for Jesus, his work is his word.
 3. 1 Thess. 4:16, *"For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first."*
 4. Life is stronger than death.
- iv. Commands that the grave clothes be removed.
1. A community effort to unwrap Lazarus from spoiled, grave clothes. Mt. 16:19, *"I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven."*
 2. Sadly many Christians remain bound by the fear of death and various sins. However, as believers, we are united with the One who is the resurrection and life. Luke 13:16, *"So ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has bound – think of it – for eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath?"*
 3. Jesus offers us freedom from the power of sin. Jn. 8:32-36, *"'And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.' They answered Him, 'We are Abraham's descendants, and have never been in bondage to anyone. How can You say, 'You will be made free'?' Jesus answered them, 'Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is*

a slave of sin. And a slave does not abide in the house forever, but a son abides forever. Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.”

4. Faith in Jesus the Christ as the resurrection and life should then give us freedom from the fear of death. Heb 2:14-15, *“Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.”*

Read Jn. 11:45-53

- f. People’s response to Christ.
 - i. Many then believed in Him.
 - ii. Some went to Jerusalem and reported Him to the Pharisees.
 - iii. The Sanhedrin then determined to kill Jesus.
 1. Jesus is accused of being a threat to national security. While they seem concerned for the nation, John says they are actually concerned about their own self-interests, as are the hirelings Jesus condemned earlier (cf. Jn. 10:12)
 2. The KOG upsets religious and political systems.
 - iv. Caiaphas *“prophesies”* Jesus’ death for the nation, but John sees the significance of Jesus’ death to extend to all of humanity. Jn. 11:51-52, *“Now this he did not say on his own authority; but being high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the nation, and not for that nation only, but also that He would gather together in one the children of God who were scattered abroad.”*
3. Take-aways
 - a. Problems can be the *“black chariots of bright grace.”*
 - b. Christ’s compassion and the calamity & cost of sin.
 - c. Jesus’ tears were a mingling of anger and grief
 - d. We need to remove whatever is blocking God’s miracle in our life
 - e. God the Father always listens
 - f. The Word of God speaks life and provides comfort
 - g. Removing the *“grave clothes”* is a group activity
 - h. Freedom in Christ releases us from the power of sin and the fear of death.
 - i. Jesus’ life and ministry causes reactions.

Ps. 30:5, *“Weeping may endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning.”*

Rev. 21:4, *“And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.”*