

## **Jesus wept – Sunday October 21<sup>st</sup> 2012.**

***“Jesus wept.” John 11:35***

Beloved in the Lord,

Our text today is the shortest verse in the Bible. It is only two words. God does not need to use a lot of words to convey a powerful message. Jesus wept. These two words; this simple verse tells us a lot of things about God and what He has revealed to us about Himself in the person of His Son Jesus Christ.

One life event that causes almost all, if not all people to weep, is the death of a loved one. It doesn't really matter how we view death it is always painful. It is always hard to say good bye to a loved one. Death leaves a void, a hole in our heart. Death always brings upheaval and a range of emotions including fear, guilt, anger, grief.

Jesus wept. The first thing that this tells us is that Jesus is empathetic. He feels our pain and knows what it is like. This verse describes what happened as Jesus stood at the tomb of His good friend Lazarus. He wept. His dear friends Martha and Mary are grief stricken at the death of their brother Lazarus. Not only does Jesus see their tears, He feels the ache in their hearts. In the previous verses we read:

***When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her also weeping, He was deeply moved in spirit and was troubled,<sup>34</sup> and said, “Where have you laid him?” They \*said to Him, “Lord, come and see.”<sup>35</sup> Jesus wept.***

This is not the only time we read of Jesus weeping, or being moved with emotion. Very often when Jesus saw the sick, the oppressed, the demon possessed, we read that He was moved with compassion. The story never ends there though, He goes on to do something about the situation that has moved Him.

Jesus wept as He approached Jerusalem for the final time. He wept over the city because of the stubbornness of people's hearts to accept the Truth, to accept Him.

We read in Matthew 23:37

***“Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were unwilling.”***

In Luke's account we read: ***“When He approached Jerusalem, He saw the city and wept over it, “(Luke 19:41)***

Two things that caused Jesus to weep were death and hardened hearts. Jesus is empathetic. He was totally man as well as God. He was man like you and me, but without sin. He understands the way we feel.

We read in Hebrews: ***“Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. <sup>15</sup> For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin. <sup>16</sup> Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”*** Hebrews 4:14-16

You see, we have a Saviour who sympathises with us, who knows, understands and cares. He invites us to come to Him, place all our burden upon Him, and receive not only comfort but also a solution.

Firstly comfort: Jesus invites us to place our burden upon Him. We hear these words at every funeral:

***“Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. <sup>29</sup> Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. <sup>30</sup> For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.”*** Matthew 11:28-30

He desires for us to come to Him and to place it all on Him. He invites us to cry on His shoulder, unburden our hearts. He can handle it. There is nothing that we can say that He cannot handle.

It is interesting to note that in the case of Lazarus’ death both Martha and Mary accuse Jesus of not preventing his death.

***Martha therefore, when she heard that Jesus was coming, went to meet Him, but Mary stayed at the house. <sup>21</sup> Martha then said to Jesus, “Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died. (John 11:20-21)***

Not long after Mary appears on the scene: ***“Therefore, when Mary came where Jesus was, she saw Him, and fell at His feet, saying to Him, “Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died.” (John 11:32)***

Both sisters are in essence saying to Jesus, “If you had gotten here quicker, Lazarus would not have died.” This was an accusation. Jesus did not respond in anger. No – He felt sympathy for them. He understood that a broken heart causes all types of emotions and thoughts.

My friends, God understands us way better than we understand ourselves. Not only does He understand, He loves us, and desires for us to speak to Him whatever is on our heart. He is God. He can handle it.

That is why He invites us to place the burden upon Him. He invites us to place our complete trust in Him. Jesus said that He would never push away anyone that comes to Him. We have

a God who loves us so very much. He promises to grant us His peace which far surpasses all human understanding.

My first really powerful experience of the death of a close person was the sudden death of my dear mother when I was only 16. Mum died very suddenly without warning. As I walked out of the hospital room where she had just died, I said to God: "I have no idea what You are doing, but You know best. I will leave it in Your hands." Instantly I was overtaken by an awesome sense of peace and even an inner joy. I knew that Mum had gone to be with Jesus whom she loved and served, and I also knew that God would provide for me and look after me. That is what God does. That is who He is.

If we do not come to Him, we do not receive this peace and assurance, but if we do, then we benefit greatly and are truly blessed.

The other point I would like to stress today is that not only does Jesus sympathise with us, He has the solution – He conquered death! You see, not only did Jesus weep, He leapt into action. With His own death and resurrection He broke the power of death for all eternity.

As He spoke to Martha He said:

***"I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies,<sup>26</sup> and everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die." John 11:25-26***

I am the Resurrection and the Life. These were not merely words. Jesus gave a powerful demonstration that day. Having wept at Lazarus tomb Jesus then said: ***"Roll away the stone"*** Martha, the ever practical one said: ***"Lord, by this time there will be a stench, for he has been dead four days."***

This meant nothing to Jesus. He could do anything. When the stone was rolled back Jesus simply said: ***"Lazarus come forth!"*** At that moment Lazarus walked out of the tomb, still wrapped in grave clothes. That was a powerful demonstration that even death has to bow to Jesus and submit to His authority.

All of this was in the lead up to Easter morning. Easter morning Jesus walked out of His tomb and now says: ***"I am the first and the last,<sup>18</sup> and the living One; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades."*** Rev.1:17-18

His hands hold the keys of death and Hades. Every single person who believes in Him, who repents of their sin and accepts Him as Lord and Saviour of their life will be raised to eternal life with Jesus.

Not only did Jesus weep, He conquered death. That day Jesus asked Martha: ***"Do you believe?"*** He was asking if she believed that He was the Resurrection and the life.

Today, He is asking each one of us the same question: Do you believe? Truly believe? Not with your mind alone, but with your heart?

If you do, then your own death is swallowed up in victory. The day is fast approaching when the Devil, sin and death will be in the lake of fire and there will be a new Heaven and a New Earth.

There will be no more death. I close with what God showed John:

***“Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea. <sup>2</sup> And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. <sup>3</sup> And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, “Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them, <sup>4</sup> and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away.” (Revelation 21:1-4)***

***Amen.***

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All Bible quotations taken from New American Standard Bible.