

Written Copy: John 11:25-26 "Why Did Jesus Weep?"

The 5th Sunday in Lent

Sunday, March 22nd, 2026

Text: John 11: 24-26

²⁴ Martha said to him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day." ²⁵ Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, ²⁶ and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?"

Exegetical Statement

When Jesus hears of His friend Lazarus' illness, He knows it will result in death. Yet He remained where He was, because it was the Father's will that Lazarus die and be dead four days before Jesus arrives. This was not for the immediate good of Lazarus or his sisters, but so that the glory of who Jesus really is and the authority He has over life and death may be clearly and powerfully displayed for them and for us. Martha and Mary see Him as responsible for their brother's death. Martha believes that since He is the Chosen One of God His prayers can avail something. But Jesus tells her and us that He has the power and authority over life now and eternal life to come. All that believe in Him and His atoning sacrifice on their behalf will have a new life lived in faith now that doesn't end with their temporal death. Temporal death is the result of sin, but Jesus Christ overcame that in His death and resurrection. The souls of all who believe will reside at His side when their bodies die, and they will be raised to life everlasting. Jesus shows He understands and experiences the grief and pain temporal death brings. But He shows that He has come to defeat the enemy that is death and gives that victory by faith. For this wonderful work the Pharisees and chief priests begin plotting His death in earnest. But as Caiaphas unwittingly gives prophetic testimony to, His death will be on behalf of the Jews and the whole world.

Focus Statement:

Jesus knows the horror and tragedy that death is for us. And He came to do something about it. He is the Resurrection and the Life. He is the God who creates and bestows life on all creatures. And through His atoning sacrifice and resurrection He earns for us a new life lived with Him now in the faith bestowed in baptism, and eternal life to come. When believers die, their souls go to be with Him and will be returned to their resurrected bodies to live together with Him forever. These are the Gospel Words of comfort He has for all men.

Function Statement:

Why it's important to know:

Even for the Christian death is a terrible tragedy. It was never meant to be, and it hurts us when our loved ones die. Temporal death is what we earn for ourselves because of our sin, not as God's punishment. Without anyone to save us, temporal death leads to eternal dying and suffering.

What the hearer should do as a result:

Realize that sadness and grief affect all who lose loved ones, even Christians. But our hope is in Jesus' atoning sacrifice and the continued forgiveness we have by faith. We face death, our own and our loved ones through faith in Him who has conquered death and gives that victory to us

Subject Sentence: As the Resurrection & Life Jesus relieves fear of death

Introduction

I don't think there is a single person among us today that has not been touched by the sadness and grief that comes when a loved one dies. I have been with some of you as your loved one passed on. I have shared the grief and tears with you at the funeral home, in my office as we planned the funeral, at the service itself, at the graveside, and even afterwards. The feelings of overwhelming sadness at the loss of someone important to you in your life are real, and they don't go away as quickly as you might like them to.

But as Christians is it wrong to feel that way? Have you ever felt that your continued sadness and grief is not what a Christian should be experiencing? Would it help for you to know that Jesus knows exactly how you feel?

Why Was Jesus Upset? Why Did He Weep?

John 11:33-38a ³³ When Jesus saw her crying, and the Jews who had come with her crying, he was deeply moved in his spirit and troubled. ³⁴ **“Where have you put him?”** he asked. **“Lord,”** they told him, **“come and see.”** ³⁵ Jesus wept. ³⁶ So the Jews said, **“See how he loved him!”** ³⁷ But some of them said, **“Couldn't he who opened the blind man's eyes also have kept this man from dying?”** ³⁸ Then Jesus, deeply moved again, came to the tomb.

It's the favorite verse of Confirmation Students: **verse 35 Jesus wept.** It may be short, but there is much for us to consider in these words. First of all, why? Why did Jesus weep? Why was He deeply moved and troubled? Because Jesus knows exactly what our sadness and grief feels like when a loved one dies. He would've experienced it when His earthly father Joseph died.

In our Gospel Lesson, we see Him sharing in Mary and Martha's grief. He loved Lazarus like a brother. He loved all three of them with God's sacrificial and unconditional love. Can you imagine how hard it was for Him to remain where He was for two days knowing that this will result in Mary and Martha's world being turned upside down? But He did so out of obedience to the Father, and because in the end something much greater and better for all people would result.

He knew and joined in with the deep sadness of Mary and Martha. Their sobbing and crying tugged at His heart strings, just as your crying, your weeping, your sadness does. He knows how you feel and shares in your grief, coming alongside you through the presence of His Spirit. Perhaps we miss that sometimes when we are consumed with sorrow and grief, that He comes to be with you too and comforts you through the presence of your brothers and sisters in the faith.

Jesus is also “**deeply moved in his spirit and troubled**”. The Greek word being translated here can also at times refer to anger. Why would Jesus be troubled and moved to the point of anger? You and I can be like that sometimes toward God when He allows our loved ones to die. That is a natural reaction on our part. Yet this is not what Jesus is feeling. He is so in union with the Father that He agrees with all the Father purposes and disposes.

Jesus’ anger and troubled spirit come from His greater knowledge of the real tragedy that death in this world is. Our culture, and some Christians, like to soften the blow by adopting Eastern Mysticism and Mythology as a way of looking at death. But that view is foreign to what we should believe and confess as Christians. It’s the Lion King’s “Circle of Life” motif where death is all a natural part of life on earth, since it happens to all creatures. Jesus knows that to be a dirty lie.

Death was never meant to be a part of God’s perfect creation. And Jesus knows that firsthand as He was there. He is God the Son by whose Word everything was spoken into existence. As the Creator God He is the source of the life that was blown into Adam’s nostrils. He gave life to Eve to be Adam’s helpmate. God created them to live in perfection forever. Nothing was ever supposed to ever die. They were created to be a body and soul combination that existed in an intimate union, body with soul.

Death came about as the result of sin. Death is the unnatural tearing apart of the soul from the body that happens when our mortal bodies succumb to death. That’s why it is such a hard grief filled event for us. That is why death is an inherently frightening event. It was never meant to be. That’s why it can be such a scary event even for Christians.

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

Jesus sees the tragedy of death as the Creator God. He hates the creature who enticed Adam and Eve to sin and thus brought death into His perfect Creation. He hates how sin and death has ruined it. He hates how death troubles, afflicts, and grieves us, how it separates us from those we love. He is angry over how it afflicts us and tears us apart. He hates sin and death, but He loves you. He knows that with sinful hearts turned in on ourselves, we cannot stop sinning. He knows how impossible it is for us to save ourselves, not just from death in this world but what our sin earns for us, eternal suffering in hell.

Jesus feels these things and knows these things. He has come to Mary and Martha in their grief, and even Lazarus, to reveal something wonderful, to change their eternal destination. He has come to do the same for you.

Jesus as The Resurrection and The Life

John 11:23-27 ²³ Jesus said to her, “**Your brother will rise again.**” ²⁴ Martha said to him, “**I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.**” ²⁵ Jesus said to her, “**I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live,** ²⁶ **and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?**” ²⁷ She said to him, “**Yes, Lord; I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who is coming into the world.**”

This is Jesus giving the Good News, the Gospel News, not just to Martha, but to all whose lives are touched by death and the grief it brings. We can tell that Martha has a belief concerning the resurrection on the Last Day. What she doesn't yet understand what Jesus has come to reveal to her, and to you and me. He has come to reveal who exactly this man is that stands before her saying these words.

I am: Jesus is saying these things not as a faithful believer in God, or as just another prophet, or as the holy man sent by God. In His humanity He is these things. He is saying them with the absolute authority of God Himself, because He is God. He is something that has never been before and never will be after Him: 100% Divine God and 100% human being. He is the Word and Promise of God made flesh. There are no greater truths than what He speaks, and you can entrust your life to them.

I am the resurrection: Jesus is affirming Martha's and our hope in the Last Day Resurrection. But even further, He is claiming to be the power and authority by which it will come. He is the One who will give the command on the Last Day for all those who are dead in their graves to rise up. He is the One who has been safeguarding in His presence the souls of all those who died in faith, from the moment their soul is ripped from the body, all the way through until that one specific day in the future. It's called the Last Day, because when it comes there will be no more days left upon this fallen earth. On that day when He returns, He will create the New Heavens and New Earth, restoring for us the perfection of the original Creation around us. And He will restore to life your body as well.

I am the life: He is the One who gave life to all creatures. He is the One who will restore life to all believers on the Last Day as He unites once again the soul with its body, the body that will be raised in glory and made new and healthy and perfect. He will raise up your body that you have now, but it will be healthier, stronger, more beautiful than you ever were in this creation. Gone will be all the physical and emotional problems that you struggle with. Gone will be all the spiritual struggles, temptations. Gone will be the sin that afflicts us daily. He is the One who will restore the perfect life lost in the fall to all who trust in Him.

Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live: All of us, except for those who may be alive at Jesus' 2nd Coming, will suffer death in this world. That is the ongoing consequence of the Fall. We will die in this world. Many times, we only see tragedy from this fact. Our current lives are a gift from God and should never be taken lightly or abused. We should never desire to end it before the time the LORD has set.

But for all who believe in Him as Lord and Savior, death is not the end of all things. Instead, it's the closing of the door on a life of sin, pain, struggle, and temptation, and the door that opens to peace in the presence of Jesus. Death is not the end for the soul. When your soul is torn from your body at death it goes to be with Jesus. In His presence all that has troubled you, afflicted you, caused fear and trepidation is gone. You continue to exist. And you will be waiting patiently for what you know is coming soon.

And everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die: Because of the curse of the Fall all men and women, when they are born, begin a life that is a slow march toward death. Not just toward physical death, but an eternal suffering and dying and torment in hell. But Jesus came to change that.

John 3:5 ⁵ Jesus answered, **“Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.**

Through your baptism you have been born again into a new life that you are living right now, one created by the Holy Spirit through the miraculous work of Conversion. He gives you a new heart and a new mind that begins to focus on loving and serving the One who made this all possible. We truly live now because Jesus Christ earned for you this new life through His life of perfect obedience to the Father. He took from you all that would condemn you to an eternity of physical, emotional, and spiritual torment in hell as your atoning sacrifice on the cross. He earned for you a new life now that does not end.

Through your baptism you have entered into His kingdom, His reign and rule. And you live there now by repentant faith. And in that faith, you never leave it. Your temporal death is not the end. It is the door that opens to eternal life to come that begins on Resurrection Day and lasts forever. This is true for you, and your loved ones who died in faith and whose souls are with Jesus awaiting Resurrection Day, when they will be reunited with you.

Our Faith in Jesus' Resurrection

Martha in her response gives this confession, **“Yes, Lord; I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who is coming into the world”** But does she realize what this truly means that He is the Anointed One, the Son of God? Does she understand what is in many ways beyond our understanding that although a man Jesus is at the same time fully God? Does she understand what that means for her, Mary, and Lazarus now and for eternity? Do we sometimes lose sight of this fact? Does she understand what Jesus is about to do? What she confesses here falls short of Jesus' revelation that He is the Resurrection and Life.

John 11:39-40 ³⁹ **“Remove the stone,”** Jesus said. Martha, the dead man's sister, told him, **“Lord, there is already a stench because he has been dead four days.”** ⁴⁰ Jesus said to her, **“Didn't I tell you that if you believed you would see the glory of God?”**

This is so great a truth that Jesus had to show her what it meant that He is the Resurrection and the life. He did that when He called out with the voice that has the same power and authority as the One who Created all things just by speaking them into existence. Jesus is the only one who could shout **John 11:43 “Lazarus, come out!”**, and the man who had been dead for four days, who should only be a rotting corpse, walks out of the tomb alive once again.

Jesus did this so that all present might believe in Him as “The Resurrection and the Life”. But for us here today, He has given us a greater sign, His own resurrection on Easter Sunday. Because in that, by faith, you and I have the promise from that same man who is at the same time God that there will come one day, the Last Day, Resurrection Day, when we too will walk out of our tombs, out of our graves, and live with Him forever.

Conclusion

Believers in Christ weep and mourn when a loved one passes. And that is okay. Jesus knows how you feel. He knows what it’s like to lose a loved one to the grave. But as we mourn, He wants us to know that by faith in Him death is not the end. You and I have a life right now that includes happy times with friends and loved ones. It will also include times of struggle, sickness, and grief. But these things are not the last word concerning our life. The final word is Jesus Words: **“I am the resurrection and the life”** As we make our way through the remainder of Lent, through the horror that Good Friday depicts, as we see and contemplate what Jesus had to suffer because of our sins, He wants us to keep in mind that Easter Sunday is coming. And more than that, the final most glorious Easter Sunday celebration that is Resurrection Day. That is His gift to you, through faith. Amen.