Jesus Wept

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Preacher: Rev Calum M Smith

[0:00] We'll turn back to our reading in John 11. And our focus this morning is on verse 35,! And we see these two words, Jesus wept.

And it's in the light of what we read in verse 33. When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in his spirit and greatly troubled.
And he said, Where have you laid him? They said to him, Lord, come and see. Jesus wept. So the Jews said, See how he loved him.
This is, of course, in light of his friends, Lazarus' passing. It's a familiar passage, perhaps to many of us, John chapter 11.
It's a chapter full of great promise to us. It has one of the great I am sayings. As Jesus says, I am the resurrection and the life.
[1:08] He is giving a promise to those who believe. So there's great hope in these words. But as you look to the passage as a whole, the context of this passage reminds us where these words come into, the situation they come into, it's in the midst of great sorrow, great weeping, great mourning.

But Jesus has these words of hope. Coming back today after a time of holiday, it's also a time knowing the pain of our communities over these last number of weeks.
The loss of the fishing boat Kilda brought such great shock to our communities, people deeply grieved by it. And it's in the forefront of our minds even still, although weeks may pass, it's still there for us.
And we know it's very much in the hearts and minds of those who feel it most. But it's also in the midst of pain and suffering in other lives as well.
There have been other losses too. In the last week I've been to three funerals, all having their own sorrow, their own sadness.
[2:24] And it's a time too when maybe for others, wounds are reopened, wounds of the past are reopened. And that grief that is still so real just shows itself again in a very painful way.

We mourn with those who mourn. And we weep together. And as we've seen in this reading and also in the Psalms that we've sung, tears are often seen in different situations.
There is always grief around us. I read a quote from an American pastor this week, Reverend Jim Baird, who said, as he looked at his own congregation, there's hurt on every pew.
And that will be true here and in every congregation that's gathered. There is hurt on every pew because we all go through our times and our experiences of hurt.
And so often when we look at situations that happen, like we've seen recently, we have many questions. It's tragic. It's cruel. What do we do?
[3:32] How do we feel in the midst of it? We can go through all the different emotions and they'll come in waves at different times. The shock, the pain, the grief, the anger, even the doubts that can come in.

In so many situations, in so many people's lives, that's the kind of experience that we go through at different times. They are all natural reactions.
But can we have hope in this situation and in all our situations of grief that we find ourselves in? What does it do to our faith?
What does it do to your faith, my faith, as we look at these circumstances, as we look at our own circumstances? Where do we turn? What do we hold on to? One of the questions that many ask when there's tragedy is the question that the psalmist experienced in Psalm 42 that we sung together.

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Where is this God of yours? It's a natural question from people in the midst of tragedy. Where is this God of yours? Why did he allow this to happen?
[4:46] It's a question we have to face up to. How do we respond to it? How do I respond to it? Well, we turn to God's word. Where is this God of yours?

Well, we see where he is as we look at this passage together today. We see that there's a reminder to us that God is there for us and with us.
What he thinks, what he wants for us in all of these situations that are before us here in this passage. It's a passage about a family's grief, but it's also about a community's grief.
There is a people who are weeping together. What we see in the midst of this is the Lord grieving with his people.
That's what we see in these two words in verse 35. Jesus wept. It's a powerful reminder to us that the Lord is with us in all our times of need.
[5:50] He wept over the people and he wept with the people. He knows the grief of Mary and Martha. He knows the grief of the community.

In the same way as he knows your grief and my grief as we go through it. He knows all our hurts. And he is able to come alongside in their tears and our tears and there to help us in these times. It's not a time to turn away. It's not a time to lose faith, to lose trust. Indeed, it's a time to come even closer to the Lord and just lean upon him and upon his promises.
And so taking these words, Jesus wept. I want us to think of three things that we see in his weeping and our weeping today. We see the weeping, first of all, is personal.
We see, secondly, the weeping is powerful. And then thirdly, we see the weeping has purpose. First of all, we see that the weeping is personal.
[6:57] The weeping is personal. And it's very clear to us, just as you read through this passage, that every time of grief is very personal.

It's something we go through by ourselves in many ways because it relates to us. It affects us all in a different way. Whether it's losing a loved one, a friend, even maybe someone we just knew a little or even didn't know at all, grief can impact on us in different ways.
It's very personal. And that comes through in this passage. Mary and Martha have lost a brother. It's a personal tragedy to them.
But we see, too, that there is a community who are mourning as well. Jesus saw them. He saw the woman weeping, but he saw the Jews and those who had come near to them weeping as well. There was a sense of this personal nature of belonging to all as well. And we see how personal it is in the kind of questions that it leads to.
[8:11] And the main question that we so often see here in this situation and in our own situations of grief is the question, why? Why?

When you look at this passage, Martha had a plan. That's what we read of at the beginning. In verse 1, there was a certain man who was the Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and his sister Martha.
It was Mary who anointed the Lord with ointment and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was ill. So the sisters sent to him saying, Lord, he whom you love is ill.
They had a plan. Lord, he whom you love is ill. They knew that Jesus could come and could heal. They had seen it before and they had heard of it as well.
And she probably believed that Lazarus being Jesus' friend, perhaps he would just come immediately, drop everything and come immediately. But what happened?
[9:16] They waited. They waited. And they waited. And he wasn't coming. He didn't arrive when they thought he would. Instead, what we see is that in the time that he waited, Lazarus passed away.

And what would that do to them, to Mary and Martha? He hasn't come. And here they are now in their personal grief, maybe asking that question, why?
Why, Lord, were you not here? You look at verse 21 and the questions that they have. In verse 21, Martha said to Jesus, Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.
Why? That's what's behind that question. Why, Jesus, were you not here? Why didn't you come? Where have you been? Mary asks the same question in verse 32.
Now, when Mary came to where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet saying, Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. the same question. Why? Why were you not here?

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[10:29] Why did you delay? Why did you not come? It's almost like he waited on purpose and he did. But why?

Well, when Jesus finally arrives, it's into this scene of great sorrow and sadness. It's amazing how Jesus says, I am glad I wasn't there at the beginning of the chapter.
Why? Does Jesus really care? Is maybe the question that they had. As each day passed and he didn't come, does Jesus really care?
And that's maybe the question that you've had. And we've had it maybe in different ways and at different times. Does Jesus really care? Why wasn't he there?
why didn't he bring a different outcome? Why didn't things turn out more successful? Why didn't people live instead of die?
[11:34] We often have that question, why? Why when so young? Why when they have families? You think of approaching the time of remembrance once again and we look back to the aisle a thing before our time and yet we can still ask questions.

Why? After all they had been through, why so close to home? Why like that does God not care?
Well, we are reminded in this passage that grief is personal and that God does care.
That God sees and God knows. You only have to go back to Exodus chapter 2 verse 24 and 25 when the children of Israel are there in Egypt in slavery under hard labor and what does it say in these verses?
God heard their groaning. God remembered his covenant with Abraham and Isaac and with Jacob. God saw the people of Israel and God knew.
And it ends there. God knew. What did he know? He knew their need and he knew that he had to take action. From the beginning God has cared and God has prepared a way.
[12:56] We live in a broken world. We live in a world of sin and grief. But we can remember that God does care.

The gospel of John itself is full of those reminders. It's full of those reminders to us that he loves. You think of the greatest verses in scripture about the love of God.
John 3 16. God so loved the world that he gave his own son. So he does care.
And his our grief is personal to him as well. And what we see in this passage then is this weeping is personal.
Jesus wept and he weeps with us in our grief as well. But what he is saying here is he didn't just hold back for no purpose at all.
[14:00] but there was a purpose in it. And we see that secondly as we see his weeping was passionate. His weeping was passionate.

You look at these verses that we read verse 33. when Jesus saw their weeping and the Jews who had come with her also weeping he was deeply moved and in a spirit greatly troubled.
Deeply moved and greatly troubled. Greatly troubled there and deeply moved they've got a powerful sense behind them.
It's like he let out a cry a snort is the way it's put the way the word is used like a harshest grant is what's behind that word.
He let this noise out that was audible to all who were around. He was troubled. He was moved. And then when you read these words Jesus wept.
[15:01] It's different to the weeping the word for weeping that's used of the others. This is Jesus with tears flowing down his face. He wept.

So in this scene of great sadness Lazarus had been dead for four years. People had come from Jerusalem to mourn with them. Mary, Martha, the crowd weeping broken people.
This is a scene that Jesus comes into and weeps and is troubled over. And today there are people all over the world in the same situation.
Providence events always remind of the reality that we are a broken and a weeping people as well. We are a people who mourn with those who mourn and at such times as these it's natural to have tears.
But Jesus' tears are different to ours. Jesus' tears here are full of passion. When it says Jesus wept, these words just need to be unpacked a little.
[16:14] Was Jesus weeping with them? Yes. He was deeply moved and greatly troubled. But there's two sides to it.

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He loved Mary, he loved Martha, he loved Lazarus. And the crowds were there, he was mourning. They were tears of compassion. Tears that ran down his face, but they were tears also of anger. Jesus was greatly troubled. Why? Because what he saw before him was not just mourning, but hopelessness and unbelief.
People had become accustomed to Jesus being one who does. One who does something. something. That's what Mary and Martha expected. Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.
They were expecting him to come and to heal him, to make him well again. And this is unbelief. Because instead of just wanting something done, that's what they expected of Jesus.
[17:31] What's at the heart of this passage is Jesus who is something. not who does something all the time, but who is something. And he is the one we are to believe and to trust.

And that when things don't go the way we hope, we can still trust in him. In verse 15 in this chapter, it says, I am glad I was not there, that you may believe.
In verse 26, he asks that question, do you believe? In verse 40, he says, did I not tell you that if you believed, there was purpose, there was passion, there was power behind these tears.
What is Jesus? What is he to you? Is he there just to help you as you want? Lord, if you had been here, this would not have happened.
But the very fact is he was there and it still happened. That's the way we see him. And then we question why? But he is more than a weeping saviour.
[18:42] He is a saviour with answers for our grief. And that's what we see in the great words of the I am saying in this passage.

Before these words, he wept, Jesus wept, he had said, I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live.
And everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this? He is looking for faith. He is looking for belief.
He weeps because the people are mourning as if there is no hope. hope. That kind of hopelessness that Paul speaks of in 1 Thessalonians chapter 4 verse 13.
But he says this to him, we do not want you to be uninformed brothers about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do with no hope. There are people who grieve with no hope.
[19:43] And that's the saddest reality of all. But that is not who we are to be. That is not what the word of God leads us to. We are to be a people who grieve and mourn and weep, but with hope.

At such times as this, we have the tears running down, but we see the tears of Jesus here, tears of compassion, tears of concern, tears of longing.
What's he longing for? That they might believe. That they might trust. Someone put it like this.
In this brief interaction, we are reminded that in the Bible, the people of God don't get answers as often as we get promises. We don't get answers as often as we get promises.
And this is a promise that Jesus gives here. I am the resurrection and the life. Though he die, yet shall he live.
[20:56] And everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. That is what he is longing for, the people of faith. Do you believe?

Grief is very personal, but so is that question. it's for you today. Do you believe? That is what he is looking for.
Are you grieving without hope or are you grieving believing? Believing that he is the resurrection and the life.
love? Because the third thing we see here is the weeping shows purpose. The weeping shows purpose.
Yes, Jesus could have come and done just as the sisters had said. If you had been here, my brother would not have died. You could have restored him in health.
[21:57] Yes, he could. But there was a purpose in this weeping too. He allowed things to go on so that he could show his greatest power.

His power over death. His power over the weeping and the grief of the people that he would show in me there is life. Because I am the resurrection and the life.
There's a place in northern Chile between the Andes mountains and the Pacific Ocean where there's a narrow strip of land. And the sun shines there every day.

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Sounds like bliss. Clouds gather so seldom that you can say it almost never rains there. Morning by morning there's a beautiful sunrise.
Evening by evening there's a beautiful sunset. Sounds idyllic. perfect. But you know what kind of place it is. It's not a paradise.
[23:01] It's a wilderness. Why? Because there's nothing to give growth. It's barren. It's dry.

It's sterile. There's no water so nothing grows there. Sounds perfect but it's far from it. And that's the reality of our lives.
We would love it if things were different so often. If there was no sorrow. If there was no sadness. If Jesus would just heal every time.
What would it be like then? We would be barren. We wouldn't have faith because things would be too easy. It's only when things are hard.
And when we realize we cannot cope by ourselves. That we cannot overcome this grief without him. That's when we realize that what we see with Jesus is there is purpose in his weeping.
[24:10] He is weeping over them and with them so that they might believe. Verse 4 tells us that this whole situation is for the glory of God.

Yes there is sorrow but if we see Jesus we can have hope. How can we have hope today? Where can you find hope?
Where can we offer hope to those who grieve today? In Jesus. Jesus who weeps. He weeps with his people.
He weeps for his people. But he weeps without purpose. As I said before people had become accustomed to Jesus being the one who does something.
So when he doesn't it's a shock. And it leads to the questions why? But the heart of this passage is Jesus who is something.
[25:16] And that is what we need. Not that he would change every situation of sorrow but that he would bring us to his promises in them.

That he is the resurrection and the life. There are so many circumstances that we would long to be different.
There are so many things that happen that we would wish had never happened because they bring us those tears. Tears that at times can seem never ending.
Heart that seems so deep that will never go away.! But it is to bring us to that knowledge of a Savior. Of a Savior who wept with Mary and Martha and this community here.
But a Savior whose tears are with us today. wept in every personal moment of grief. He wept knowing the power that was his and the purpose that he would show.
[26:28] He is the resurrection and the life. We weep but let us not weep without hope but to see our hope in him who is the resurrection and the life and to pray that hope for others.

Let us pray. Lord our gracious God we thank you that you are one who knows and sees our every need. Our hearts are bare before you whether they be broken in sorrow or full of joy.
Lord there is nothing that is hidden from you and our tears are numbered by you. The word speaks of them being bottled up in that way. In that way that you know every one of them.
Our grief is personal to you. Everyone's grief is personal to you. But we thank you that you are one who is there for us. One who we can look to and lean upon all your promises.
And especially the promise that you give that when we believe that you know that you are indeed the resurrection and the life. Lord how we need it.
[27:40] how we need it for those around us. How we need it for all we see around us who mourn and grieve. Lord that they would be comforted by you. That you would comfort us with the comfort that only you can give.

Hear our prayers and continue with us. Guide us and keep us. Help us to believe as we ask all in his precious name. Amen. Amen. Amen.
We're going to sing again to God's praise in Psalm 46a the Sing Psalms version page 60 of the Psalm book.
Psalm 46a we'll sing from verse 9 down to the end of the Psalm. In every land throughout the earth he makes all conflicts cease.
He shatters bow and spear and shield and brings his reign of peace. Be still and know that I am God on earth exalted high and all the nations of the world my name will glorify.

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[28:47] The Lord Almighty is with us to strengthen and sustain for Jacob's God our strong defense and fortress doth remain. As soon as Stroudwater we stand to sing these three verses.

every land throughout the earth he makes all conflicts cease.
He shatters soul and fear and shield and brings his reign of peace.
Be still and know that I am God on earth exalted I and all the nations of the world my name will glorify.
The Lord Almighty is with us to strengthen and sustain for Jacob's God our strong defense and fortress will remain.
[30:45] After the benediction I'll go to the main door. We'll close with the benediction. Now may grace, mercy and peace from God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit rest upon and abide with us all, no one forevermore.

Amen. Go to God We'll take those things.
God good love. God Oh God God love. God God God God God God God God God God God God God God God God God God God God God God God God God God God God God God God God God God God God God God God God God God God God God God God God fathers God God God God fathers fathers God God God God

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