

THE TEARS AND THE TOMB

DJ OLSON

“Now when Mary came to where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet, saying to him, ‘Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.’ 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” (John 11:32-35, ESV).

The humanity of Jesus is shown clearly in the short but powerful verse, “Jesus wept.” These two words remind us that Jesus wasn’t just a distant or untouchable figure—He lived a truly human life. He was born to a mother, grew up as a child, obeyed His parents, and grew in wisdom and strength. As an adult, He walked the dusty roads of Judea, Galilee, and Samaria. He worked with His hands as a carpenter. He got hungry, thirsty, and tired. Sometimes He looked for solitude when burdened. Even though Jesus never sinned, He lived a fully human life. He showed us what it really means to be human—in body, mind, and spirit. He was the perfect example of a real person, with a physical body just like ours.

In Jesus Christ, we see both God and man. He is fully divine and fully human. This is shown in a touching way when He wept at Lazarus’ tomb. Jesus didn’t just watch human pain from a distance—He entered into it. He shared in our weakness, our grief, and our sorrow.

We see this clearly in the verse, *“He took our illnesses and bore*

our diseases” (Matthew 8:17, ESV).

Before this moment, Martha, Mary’s sister, had already met Jesus, telling Him, *“Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But even now I know that whatever you ask from God, God will give you” (John 11:21-22, ESV).* Her words carry both faith and sorrow as she mourns the loss of her brother, Lazarus. They also speak to our own struggles to trust in the midst of what seems like an ending.

Martha’s words show a heart caught between faith and doubt, hope and despair. She believes in Jesus as the Messiah, but her faith is shaped by her understanding of both the earthly and heavenly worlds. She can’t grasp that the One standing before her isn’t limited by those boundaries. In this, we see reflections of our own spiritual journey. Like Martha, we believe in God’s power, but often only within the limits of what we can understand

Jesus responded with a reassurance that went beyond Martha’s immediate understanding: *“Your brother will rise again” (John 11:23, ESV).* Martha, thinking He was referring to a distant future, answered, *“I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day” (John 11:24, ESV).* While her faith was sincere, it was still bound by human expectations.

Here, we see the contrast between the present reality and the future promise of God’s kingdom. Martha believes in the resurrection to

come but struggles to apply that belief to her current situation. This is something many of us face in our Christian journey. We believe in God's ultimate victory, but sometimes find it hard to trust in His power for our present struggles. Still, Jesus calls us to a faith that goes beyond time, a faith that sees God's kingdom at work in our lives today.

"Now when He was asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, He answered them and said, "The kingdom of God does not come with observation; nor will they say, 'See here!' or 'See there!' For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you" (Luke 17:20-21, NKJV).

When Jesus stood before Lazarus' tomb, we saw the depth of His compassion. Seeing the tears of Mary and the others, He wasn't just a bystander; He truly shared in their grief. His tears weren't only for Lazarus, but for all of humanity—every sorrow, every loss, and every moment of doubt.

At this moment, Jesus groaned in the Spirit again (John 11:38). Even though the Messiah was standing right before Mary and the other mourners, their hearts remained clouded by unbelief, stopping them from fully recognizing Him as the Son of God. Their struggle to see beyond their grief and doubt deeply troubled Him.

In this moment of deep emotion, we see a powerful truth: God is not indifferent to our pain. Through His tears, Jesus shows a heart that breaks alongside ours. He truly is *"a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief"* (Isaiah 53:3, ESV).

His tears are a testament to His love for God's children. They are not a sign of weakness, but a display of great strength. In His tears, we see the love of a Savior who steps into our deepest pain. He doesn't stand apart from our suffering but enters fully into it, sharing in it with us and for us.

This reveals an important aspect of faith. Jesus 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"* (John 11:25, ESV). This promise wasn't just for the distant future, but for the present. Jesus was inviting Martha—and all of us—to trust in His power right now.

Too often, like Martha, we tend to place God's promises in the future, believing in His ultimate victory while doubting His power in the present. Yet, the same Christ who will one day wipe away every tear is here with us now, offering life and hope even in our current struggles.

"Then Jesus, again groaning in Himself, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone lay against it. Jesus said, 'Take away the stone.' Martha, the sister of him who was dead, said to Him, 'Lord, by this time there is a stench, for he has been dead four days.' Jesus said to her, 'Did I not say to you that if you would believe you would see the glory of God?' Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead man was lying. And Jesus lifted up His eyes and said, 'Father, I thank You that You have

heard Me. And I know that You always hear Me, but because of the people who are standing by I said this, that they may believe that You sent Me.' Now when He had said these things, He cried with a loud voice, 'Lazarus, come forth!' And he who had died came out bound hand and foot with graveclothes, and his face was wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, 'Loose him, and let him go'" (John 11:38-44, NKJV).

When Jesus spoke to Martha, saying, *"Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?"* He boldly declared His identity and authority. He wasn't just a teacher or prophet—He was the very source of life. His words invite us to have faith that goes beyond our circumstances, a faith that sees past death to the power of His resurrection.

We should ask ourselves: When God speaks, will I believe? Do I truly trust that God can transform my life, even with all my weaknesses and failures? Many of us hear God's call but dismiss it due to doubts or busyness.

In our daily lives, even with all the good things we do, it's easy to get caught up in a whirlwind of activities that distract us from truly hearing and believing God's voice. The Christian life isn't meant to be just a routine without divine power. When we recognize this and seek to align with God's will, we open ourselves up to be transformed.

Martha's encounter with Jesus challenges us to reflect on our own faith. Do we really believe that Jesus is the resurrection and the life? Do we trust Him to bring life out of death, hope out of despair, and light out of darkness? These are not just theological ideas—they are the heart of our faith. They call us to trust Jesus more deeply, the One who holds authority over both life and death.

To truly embrace and believe in the words of Jesus, we need to invite Him to cleanse our hearts. Just as He cleansed the temple in Jerusalem, driving out those who had turned His Father's house into a marketplace, He declared, *"My house shall be called a house of prayer; but you have made it a den of thieves"* (Matthew 21:12-13, NKJV). In the same way, we need to ask Jesus to remove all distractions from our lives—anything that prevents us from fully trusting in Him. This cleansing is not a one-time event but a continual process of repentance and renewal.

Has God been speaking to you, but you've been pushing Him away with busyness and doubt? Our walk lacks spiritual authority until we say, "Lord God, I believe. I won't drown out Your voice or the Holy Spirit with worldly distractions. I will trust You to guide my steps every day. Thank You, Holy Spirit, for interceding for me. Bring me in line with God's will. Not my will, but Yours be done, Lord Jesus!"

When we allow Jesus to cleanse our hearts, our testimony becomes a living proof of a real, living God, and we can't help but share with others the incredible things He has done for us. All things are possible—not just in the future, but right here, right now.

The love of Jesus is not a passive sentiment. It's a love that enters

into our suffering, carries our burdens, and transforms us. This love is most clearly displayed in the tears of Jesus at Lazarus's tomb. His tears show His deep compassion and His love for us. This love moves Him to heal the sick, feed the hungry, and raise the dead. It is the same love that drove Him to the cross, where He took on our sins. It's the love that conquered death and brought new life.

We are called to live with the hope and certainty of what the resurrection of Jesus brings. We are to live with the assurance that His power is working in our lives, bringing new life. Our mission is to bring hope and healing to those around us, sharing the love and compassion of Jesus with a hurting world. This is the calling of the church—to be a living testimony to the resurrection power of Jesus Christ.

The resurrection of Jesus points us to the ultimate hope of glory. It reminds us that death is not the end, but a passage to a new and glorious life. The hope of glory is a key theme in the New Testament. It is the hope that we will one day be fully united with Christ. This hope gives us the strength to endure life's trials, knowing that our present suffering is nothing compared to the glory that will be revealed in us.

“For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope; because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God” (Romans 8:18, ESV).

This also means that we are called to trust in God's promises and live in obedience to His will. We are to “...seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you” (Matthew 6:33, NKJV). Faithfulness is not only about believing the right things but also about living in a way that reflects Christ within us. It involves being faithful in our relationships, our work, and our service to others. It means being people of integrity who live out our faith in every area of life and who love our neighbors as ourselves.

The Holy Spirit plays a vital role in helping us live lives of faithfulness. He is the one who guides us in truth and transforms us into the image of Christ. The Holy Spirit is the presence of Jesus within us, and He intercedes for us, praying when we do not know how to pray. He is our helper, comforter, and advocate.

This is not something we do on our own. We are called to walk alongside other believers. The church is the body of Christ, and we are each members of that body. We need one another for support, encouragement, and accountability. The church is crucial to our spiritual growth. It is through the church that we learn to love and serve one another, bear each other's burdens, and deepen our faith. The church is where we experience the love and grace of God in practical ways.

The church is also meant to be a witness to the resurrection power of Jesus Christ. This means we are to share the good news of Jesus' death and resurrection, make disciples of all nations, and teach them to follow everything He has commanded us (Matthew 28:19-20).

The resurrection of Jesus points us to the hope of the new creation. It is the promise that one day, God will make all things new. There will be a new heaven and a new earth, where there will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain. *“Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, “Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. 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” (Revelation 21:1-4, NKJV).*

The tears of Jesus at Lazarus's tomb invite us to trust in His love for us and His promise to us. They offer an invitation to experience the transformation that comes from truly having a relationship with Him.

The raising of Lazarus and the resurrection of Jesus were both powerful miracles, but they are not the same. When Jesus called Lazarus out of the tomb, Lazarus came back to life in his same physical body. He was still a mortal man who would one day die again. This was a temporary return to life—a sign of Jesus' authority over death. But when Jesus rose from the dead, it was entirely different. His resurrection was permanent and victorious. He rose with a glorified body (Luke 24:6), never to die again (Romans 6:9). His resurrection broke the power of death and opened the door to eternal life for all who believe (1 Corinthians 15:20). Lazarus came back to this life, but Jesus rose into a new kind of life that will never end.

“Lazarus, come forth” (John 11:43, ESV). These words, spoken so long ago, still resonate today, reaching beyond the tomb to speak to our hearts. Perhaps you feel overwhelmed by sin, shame, or spiritual emptiness, as though life has passed you by. But Jesus is still calling, still offering hope to what seems hopeless. He beckons you out of the darkness, offering the chance for a fresh beginning and a new life in Him. No matter how lost you may feel, it's never too late to hear God's call and start anew. In Christ, there is always the hope of transformation.

As we reflect on this, let us be encouraged to believe in the power of Jesus. Let us open our hearts to His love and grace, allowing Him to cleanse and renew us. Let us be a people of faith, hope, and love, sharing the good news of Jesus with a world in need. Let us live in the promise of the resurrection, knowing that with God, all things are possible and the gift of eternal life is for us. He's calling you today. Don't stay buried in the tomb—step into life. †

Watch Therefore and Pray

Markus Hansen

“And as it was in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man: They ate, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. Likewise as it was also in the days of Lot: They ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they built; but on the day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all. Even so will it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed” (Luke 17:26-30).

This is what we witness today. We, along with our neighbours, are doing all the activities listed in this scripture. Is our focus on acquiring more possessions to keep up with our neighbours? Are we heavily involved in social causes and politics leaving little time to watch and pray? Are we anxiously waiting for the kingdom of God to come? Well, wait no longer, for Jesus said, *“The kingdom of God does not come with observation; nor will they say, ‘See here!’ or ‘See there!’ For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you” (Luke 17:20-21).* If the kingdom of God is within you and me, then it is in the body of Christ, the church. There is no future in any human political government or man-derived religious sectarian organization. The one and only hope for this dying world is the kingdom of God being established here on this earth!

Consider a chicken egg. It is hidden from view for 21 days until a little chick appears. During this period, all vital organs are formed. Until it hatches, it is encased in the yolk surrounded by a white fluid called the albumen and further protected by the eggshell. In a sense, the egg is a type, a shadow of God’s church today. We are hidden from the world at large. Very few people know we exist. But while hidden, God is in the process of changing us into the likeness of Jesus. The eggshell, though hard, is porous, allowing oxygen and undesirable microorganisms to enter and toxins to exit. The albumen is designed specifically to keep microbes from destroying the yolk. Likewise, God’s church is covered and protected from the onslaughts of the enemy by fathers and mothers of the home and local and universal elders and deacons. During the embryonic period, from five weeks until a chick hatches, the fetus continues to develop, gaining weight and preparing for life outside its shell. This is where we are as God’s chosen people in this present hour. During this period of being hidden away from the world at large we are being changed into the likeness of Christ. *“This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the Lord: I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds I will write them” (Hebrews 10:16).*

Saints of God, there is a process of regeneration that is taking place in our lives as we yield to the will of the Holy Spirit. *“But when the kindness and the love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit” (Titus 3:4-5).* When we conduct our lives in accordance with the teaching of Jesus and the revelation of this present move of the Holy Spirit, we are being changed into the likeness of Christ. *“For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection” (Romans 6:5-6).* *“Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure” (1 John 3:1-3).* Glory to God, hallelujah.

The fully functioning, visible government of the kingdom of God is yet to come here on this earth. It will come into existence when Jesus returns. (Daniel 7,13-14,18, 27). Until Christ returns, let us continue to watch and pray allowing the Holy Spirit to remould us into the image and likeness of God’s Son, Jesus Christ. †

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