

## The Tears of Jesus

John 11:35

### I. Introduction: 1, 2

1. **3** The shortest verse in the Bible may also be the most emotional and powerful sentence ever written: “Jesus wept.” (Jn. 11:35)
  - A. Often we have the wrong idea about Jesus the man; we look at Him as some sort of “superman.”
  - B. Approximately 86 times the Scriptures refer to Jesus as the “Son of Man.” This stresses His human side.
  - C. It was important for Jesus to share our “humanity” (**Heb. 2:14-18**).
2. Thus, Jesus shared the same feelings of compassion, anger, frustration, and sorrow as you and me. In fact, the Scriptures reveal that on at least three occasions Jesus shed tears.
3. Let’s take a look at these three occasions and draw some important lessons from them.

### II. Discussion:

#### I. 4 At Lazarus’ Tomb

A. Read **Jn. 11:1-44**

B. What do His tears at Lazarus’ tomb tell us?

(1) **\*\*** They speak of Jesus’ human nature:

- (a) The gospel of Mark reveals Jesus of Nazareth as the “Son of Man” 14 times.
- (b) Even more so, Mark rightly portrays Jesus as a servant of action (**Mk. 10:45**: “For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”).

(2) **5** They speak of Jesus’ human feelings and emotions:

- (a) He loved little children (**Mk. 10:16**: “And He took them up in His arms, laid His hands on them, and blessed them.”).
- (b) He took a damsel by the hand (**Mk. 5:41**: “Then He took the child by the hand, and said to her, ‘Talitha, cumi,’ which is translated, ‘Little girl, I say to you, arise.’”).
- (c) He was angry (**Mk. 3:5**: “And when He had looked around at them with anger, being grieved by the hardness of their hearts, He said to the man, ‘Stretch out your hand.’ And he stretched it out, and his hand was restored as whole as the other.”).
- (d) He felt love (**Mk. 10:21**: “Then Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and said to him, ‘One thing you lack: Go your way, sell whatever you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, take up the cross, and follow Me.”).
- (e) He sighed (**Mk. 7:34**: healing the deaf mute “Then, looking up to heaven, He sighed, and said to him, ‘Ephphatha,’ that is, ‘Be opened.’”; **Mk. 8:12**: “But He sighed deeply in His spirit, and said, ‘Why does this generation seek a sign? Assuredly, I say to you, no sign shall be given to this generation.’”).
- (f) **6** He had compassion (**Mk. 6:34**: feeding the 5,000 “And Jesus, when He came out, saw a great multitude and was moved with compassion for them, because they were like sheep not having a shepherd.”).
- (g) He was hungry (**Mk. 11:12**: withered the fig tree “Now the next day, when they had come out from Bethany, He was hungry.”).

- (h) He became tired (**Mk. 6:31**: “*And He said to them, ‘Come aside by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while.’ For there were many coming and going, and they did not even have time to eat.*”).
- (i) He slept (**Mk. 4:38**: “*But He was in the stern, asleep on a pillow. And they awoke Him and said to Him, ‘Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing?’*”; **Heb. 2:17-18**: “*Therefore, in all things He had to be made like His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. 18 For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted.*”).
- (3) **7** They speak of Jesus’ sympathy: Jesus wept tears of sympathy: Mary, Martha and Lazarus were close and dear friends; Jesus felt their sorrow and shared their tears (**Heb. 4:15**: “*For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.*”).
- (4) **8** They speak of Jesus’ love:
- (a) Those around Jesus when He wept over Lazarus proclaimed, “*See how He loved him!*” He loved Lazarus as a friend; Jesus’ tears showed the depth of His love for Lazarus and his sisters.
- (b) **9** “Does Jesus Care?” by Frank E. Graeff
- Does Jesus care when my heart is pained too deeply for mirth or song.  
As the burdens press, and the cares distress, and the way grows weary and long?  
O yes, He cares, I know He cares, His heart is touched with my grief;  
When the days are weary, the long night dreary, I know my Savior cares.
- Does Jesus care when my way is dark with a nameless dread and fear?  
As the daylight fades into deep night shades, does He care enough to hear?  
O yes, He cares, I know He cares, His heart is touched with my grief;  
When the days are weary, the long night dreary, I know my Savior cares.
- 10** Does Jesus care when I’ve tried and failed to resist some temptation strong;  
When for my deep grief there is no relief, tho’ my tears flow all the night long?  
O yes, He cares, I know He cares, His heart is touched with my grief;  
When the days are weary, the long night dreary, I know my Savior cares.
- Does Jesus care when I’ve said “goodby” to the dearest on earth to me,  
And my sad heart aches till it nearly breaks, is it aught to Him? Does He see?  
O yes, He cares, I know He cares, His heart is touched with my grief;  
When the days are weary, the long night dreary, I know my Savior cares.
- (c) **11** Yes! Absolutely without question! Jesus loves me! He sheds tears for those who are lost in sin. He grieves for those who have strayed from the truth. He weeps for every soul that is hurting or eternally lost.
- John 15:13-15**: “*Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends. 14 You are My friends if you do whatever I command you. 15 No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you.*”
- (5) **12** They speak of Jesus’ anger:
- (a) Jesus’ tears were also tears of anger; He was angry at sin, Satan and death.
- (b) God finds no joy in the death of men; He is angry at death (**Ezek. 18:23**: “*Do I have any pleasure at all that the wicked should die?*” says the Lord GOD, ‘*and not that he should turn from his ways and live?*’”; **Ezek. 18:31-32**: “*Cast away from you all the transgressions which you have*

*committed, and get yourselves a new heart and a new spirit. For why should you die, O house of Israel? 32 For I have no pleasure in the death of one who dies," says the Lord GOD. 'Therefore turn and live!'").*

## 2. 13 Over Jerusalem

A. Read **Lk. 19:28-46**

B. What do His tears over Jerusalem tell us?

(1) **\*\*** They speak of Jesus' compassion:

- (a) Jesus saw the misery, pain, anguish and suffering that would befall Jerusalem; He knew that hundreds of thousands would die horrible deaths and thousands more would suffer the humiliation of exile into slavery:

**Matt. 24:21-22:** *"For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. 22 And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened."*

**Luke 21:23-24:** *"For there will be great distress in the land and wrath upon this people. 24 And they will fall by the edge of the sword, and be led away captive into all nations. And Jerusalem will be trampled by Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled."*

- (b) From April to mid-August 70 A.D. 1.1 million of Jerusalem's 1.2 million inhabitants were killed or died (crucifixion, cannibalism, internecine fighting); the remaining 100,000 were marched away in chains and scattered to the wind as slaves.

- (c) When we are in pain and troubles, Jesus weeps for us!

(2) **14** They speak of Jesus' righteous wrath:

- (a) Jesus had to rebuke the Pharisees for their envy, rejection, self-righteousness, hypocrisy and ignorance. Their ignorance was willful; thus it was sin. It led to their destruction; thus, Jesus shed tears of righteous indignation (Matt. 23).

- (b) God does not accept nor enjoy the ignorance and sin of the wicked (**Hos. 4:6:** *"My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge, I also will reject you from being priest for Me; Because you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children."*; **2 Pet. 3:9:** *"The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance."*).

## 3. 15 At Gethsemane:

A. Read **Matt. 26:36-44** (*"who, in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications, with vehement cries and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death, and was heard because of His godly fear,"* (Heb. 5:7)

B. What do His tears at Gethsemane tell us?

(1) **\*\*** They speak of Jesus' loneliness:

- (a) Jesus had spoken to vast crowds; multitudes had followed Him.

- (b) But when He had to face His darkest hour, when He had to contemplate His greatest humiliation, suffering and death He was about to experience; He had to face all that alone in the garden (**Matt 26:40:** *"Then He came to the disciples and found them sleeping, and said to Peter, 'What! Could you not watch with Me one hour?'"*).

(2) **16** They speak of Jesus' agony:

- (a) Job said, "...man is born unto trouble" (Job 5:7).
- (b) One poet said, "Man is made to mourn."
- (c) Jesus was "a man of sorrows" (Isa. 53:3); "He is despised and rejected by men, a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him. Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed Him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted" (Isa. 53:3-4).
- (d) Jesus Himself spoke of His great sorrow: "Then He said to them, 'My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death. Stay here and watch with Me'" (Matt. 26:38).
- (e) Jesus prayed in agony: "And being in agony, He prayed more earnestly. Then His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground." (Lk. 22:44)

(3) **17** They speak of Jesus' betrayal:

- (a) Jesus knew his betrayer, He was well-acquainted with the treacherous traitor Judas; He had spent hours, weeks and years with Judas pretending to be His disciple and friend.
- (b) Jesus cried for Judas leading Him to the slaughter; Jesus weeps today for those who betray Him.

(4) **18** They speak of Jesus' obedience: **Heb. 5:7-9:** "who, in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications, with vehement cries and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death, and was heard because of His godly fear, 8 though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered. 9 And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him,"

- (a) Obedience is expensive! Obedience requires suffering, sorrow and tears.
- (b) **Heb. 12:3-4:** "For consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls. 4 You have not yet resisted to bloodshed, striving against sin."

### III. Conclusion: **19**

1. Jesus shed His tears so He could wipe away our tears (**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.").
2. Have you obeyed the gospel? If not, you're causing Jesus to shed tears even now!
3. Are you growing as you should as a Christian? If not, you're causing Jesus to shed tears even now!
4. Do you "seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness"? (Matt. 6:33) If not, you're causing Jesus to shed tears even now!
5. You can end His tears today by obeying NOW! 2 Cor. 6:2: "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation."

Adapted from a sermon by Wayne Greeson in *Sowing the Seed* 3, pp. 76-78