



Jesus Wept

John 11:35 “Jesus wept”, is the shortest verse in scripture. Did you know this is a caregiver story? Let’s go to the beginning and see what caused Jesus to cry.

The story begins in the first verse of John 11 with the declaration that Lazarus, the brother of Mary and Martha was sick. We don’t know what is wrong with Lazarus, only that it is serious enough for Mary and Martha to send word to Jesus. Mary and Martha were very concerned. The word they send to Jesus is, “Lord, the one you love is sick.” These words do not sound like a prayer, but they are. Surrounding these seven words are so many feelings. What is your prayer for someone you love? How would you express your words for to Jesus? I wonder why they didn’t say, “Jesus, please come here right away and heal Lazarus, Lord, we need you now.”

These sisters were Lazarus’s caregivers. They were concerned enough to send word to Jesus knowing they needed Jesus help. Were the sisters anticipating the worst? Do you wonder what lies in the future for someone you love? The sisters loved Lazarus and their feelings of worry and concern were very real. You would think that they would say to Jesus, “Lord, the one we love is sick.” Isn’t that appropriate?

Jesus had a history with this family and they reminded Jesus that Lazarus that Lazarus was the one Jesus loved. These words of the sisters focus on a direct relationship of love between Lazarus and Jesus. I wonder what Lazarus’s prayers might have been in the capsule of his mind.

Jesus delayed two days. Lazarus died.

Jesus came to Bethany and found Martha and Mary being comforted by their friends. The sisters must have felt let down by Jesus. When Martha saw Jesus her feelings came out as she said, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.” She blames Jesus! Jesus did not meet up to her expectations. It was His fault. She was hurt. Are you hurt or angry when God does not live up to your expectations?

Martha’s relationship with Jesus is stronger than her hurt or anger. She goes on and says, “But I know even now God will give you whatever you ask.” Martha holds on to Jesus love and her faith in Him.

Jesus says, “Your brother will rise again.” Martha says, “Yes, I know about the resurrection on the last day.” Her pain will linger for a long time, until the ultimate resurrection. The sting of loss. The pain of feeling Jesus let her down. Her long term hope was smaller than her near term pain. Hope sounded to her like a platitude.

Jesus then meets Mary. Her words are exactly the same as Martha’s words. “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.” The sisters had talked about this a lot before Jesus came.

Martha we know from another time with Jesus. She was the practical one, focused on a dinner for Jesus. Mary we know as the one who sat at Jesus feet to soak up all His words.

Mary, after saying, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died”, bursts out in tears. Those comforting her also could not contain their tears. This expression of

love in their weeping moved Jesus deeply and He was troubled by their feelings of loss. "Where have you taken Lazarus?" Jesus asked. "Come and see," they replied. Jesus walked with them to the tomb and that is when Jesus wept. The Jews said, "See how he loved him!"

I think Jesus loved them all. He was moved by seeing the sting of death, the human morning of one who has died. Jesus came to the tomb and was once more deeply moved. Lazarus was raised from the dead by Jesus and joy returned to the house of Mary and Martha. Lazarus would have another day to face his death again, as would Mary and Martha.

Were Mary and Martha good caregivers? What did they do right? I believe they were physically present in Lazarus's care. I believe they loved Lazarus. They interceded for Lazarus in their prayer (message) to Jesus. Their faith, in the midst of question, remained. The real seed of hope are in the words of both sisters when they addressed Jesus as "Lord." Jesus is Lord. That is the first confession of the church. Even in their feelings of disappointment, their hurt, their grief, their lack of understanding, the loss in their life, their anger at Jesus delay - in faith and love they addressed Jesus as LORD. By this address and confession they are saying, "I believe you are the Christ, the Son of God, who was promised and has come into the world." In life, in death and in life again Jesus is LORD.

Soon they will mourn again. Jesus is going to Jerusalem to die. They will mourn again, not for Lazarus, but for Jesus. But like Lazarus, Jesus will rise from the dead, never again to die. Mary and Martha will remember that Jesus said to them, "I am the resurrection and the life."

The call to caregiving is a loving responsibility. It is a privilege to honor and love. As Ken Haugk writes in his book titled, "Christian Caregiving, A Way of Life," there are times when we cannot control all that we would like. Our faith becomes a valuable resource. In Jesus own mysterious way, we pray that He will answer your call and give you what you need. Jesus weeps with those who weep that He may will rejoice those who rejoice. May God bless and be with all, His wonderful caregivers.